The Century Bible

Illustrated

THE CENTURY BIBLE

General Editor—Principal WALTER F. ADENEY, M.A., D.D.

OLD TESTAMENT

GENESIS. Rev. Prof. W. H. BENNETT, M.A., Litt.D., D.D., of New College and Hackney College, London. **EXODUS.** Rev. Prof. W. H. BENNETT, M.A., Litt.D., D.D.	Vol. I.
LEVITICUS AND **NUMBERS.** Rev. Prof. A. R. S. KENNEDY, M.A., D.D., of the University of Edinburgh. **DEUTERONOMY** AND **JOSHUA.** Rev. Prof. H. WHEELER ROBINSON, M.A., Rawdon College, late Senior Kennicott Scholar in the University of Oxford.	Vol. II.
JUDGES AND **RUTH.** Rev. G. W. THATCHER, M.A., B.D., Tutor, Mansfield College, Oxford. **I & II SAMUEL.** Rev. Prof. A. R. S. KENNEDY, M.A., D.D.	Vol. III.
I & II KINGS. Rev. Principal SKINNER, M.A., D.D., of Westminster College, Cambridge. **I & II CHRONICLES.** Rev. W. HARVEY JELLIE, M.A., B.D.	Vol. IV.
EZRA, NEHEMIAH, AND **ESTHER.** Rev. Prof. T. WITTON DAVIES, B.A., Ph.D., of the Baptist College, and the University College of North Wales, Bangor. **JOB.** Rev. Prof. A. S. PEAKE, M.A., D.D., of the University of Manchester.	Vol. V.
PSALMS (Vol. I) I TO LXXII. Rev. Prof. W. T. DAVISON, M.A., D.D., of Handsworth College, Birmingham. **PSALMS** (Vol. II) **LXXIII TO END.** Rev. Prof. T. WITTON DAVIES, B.A., Ph.D.	Vol. VI.
PROVERBS, ECCLESIASTES, AND **SONG OF SOLOMON.** Prof. G. CURRIE MARTIN, M.A., B.D., of the United College, Bradford. **ISAIAH** (Chaps. i-xxxix). Rev. Principal O. C. WHITEHOUSE, M.A., D.D., of Cheshunt College, Cambridge.	Vol. VII.
ISAIAH (Chaps. xl-lxvi). Rev. Principal O. C. WHITEHOUSE, M.A., D.D. **JEREMIAH** (Vol. I). Rev. Prof. PEAKE, M.A., D.D.	Vol. VIII.
JEREMIAH (Vol. II) AND **LAMENTATIONS.** Rev. Prof. PEAKE, M.A., D.D. **EZEKIEL.** Rev. Prof. W. F. LOFTHOUSE, M.A., of Handsworth College, Birmingham.	Vol. IX.
MINOR PROPHETS: HOSEA, JOEL, AMOS, OBADIAH, JONAH, MICAH. Rev. R. F. HORTON, M.A., D.D., London. **MINOR PROPHETS: NAHUM, HABAKKUK, ZEPHANIAH, HAGGAI, ZECHARIAH, MALACHI.** Rev. Prof. S. R. DRIVER, D.D., Litt.D., of the University of Oxford.	Vol. X.
DANIEL. Rev. Prof. R. H. CHARLES, D.D., of the University of Dublin.	Vol. XI.

NEW TESTAMENT

MATTHEW. Rev. Prof. SLATER, M.A., of Didsbury College, Author of 'The Faith and Life of the Early Church.' **MARK.** The late Rev. Principal SALMOND, D.D., Aberdeen.	Vol. I.
LUKE. Rev. Principal W. F. ADENEY, M.A., D.D., of Lancashire Independent College, Author of 'How to Read the Bible.' **JOHN.** Rev. J. A. McCLYMONT, D.D., Author of 'The New Testament and its Writers.'	Vol. II.
ACTS. Rev. Prof. J. VERNON BARTLET, M.A., D.D., of Mansfield College, Oxford, Author of 'The Apostolic Age.' **ROMANS.** Rev. Principal A. E. GARVIE, M.A., D.D., of New College and Hackney College, London.	Vol. III.
I AND II CORINTHIANS. Prof. J. MASSIE, M.A., D.D., of Mansfield College, Oxford. **PHILIPPIANS, EPHESIANS, COLOSSIANS, PHILEMON.** Prof. G. CURRIE MARTIN, M.A., B.D. **I AND II THESSALONIANS, GALATIANS.** Rev. Principal ADENEY, M.A., D.D.	Vol. IV.
THE PASTORAL EPISTLES. Rev. R. F. HORTON, M.A., D.D., London. **HEBREWS.** Rev. Prof. A. S. PEAKE, M.A., D.D.	Vol. V.
THE GENERAL EPISTLES. Rev. Prof. W. H. BENNETT, M.A. **REVELATION.** Rev. Prof. C. ANDERSON SCOTT, M.A.	Vol.

THE CENTURY BIBLE

General Editor—Principal **WALTER F. ADENEY, M.A., D.D.**

OLD TESTAMENT

Vol. I.	GENESIS. Rev. Prof. W. H. BENNETT, M.A., Litt D., D.D., of New College and Hackney College, London. EXODUS. Rev. Prof. W. H. BENNETT, M.A., Litt.D., D.D.
Vol. II.	LEVITICUS AND NUMBERS. Rev. Prof. A. R. S. KENNEDY, M.A., D.D., of the University of Edinburgh. DEUTERONOMY AND JOSHUA. Rev. Prof. H. WHEELER ROBINSON, M.A., Rawdon College, late Senior Kennicott Scholar in the University of Oxford.
Vol. III.	JUDGES AND RUTH. Rev. G. W. THATCHER, M.A., B.D., Tutor in Mansfield College, Oxford. I & II SAMUEL. Rev. Prof. A. R. S. KENNEDY, M.A., D.D.
Vol. IV.	I & II KINGS. Rev. Principal SKINNER, M.A., D.D., of Westminster College, Cambridge. I & II CHRONICLES. Rev. W. HARVEY JELLIE, M.A., B.D., Litt.D.
Vol. V.	EZRA, NEHEMIAH, AND ESTHER. Rev. Prof. T. WITTON DAVIES, B.A., Ph.D., of the Baptist College, and the University College of North Wales, Bangor. JOB. Rev. Prof. A. S. PEAKE, M.A., D.D., of the University of Manchester.
Vol. VI.	PSALMS (Vol. I) I TO LII. Rev. Prof. W. T. DAVISON, M.A., D.D., of Handsworth College, Birmingham. PSALMS (Vol. II) LIII TO END. Rev. Prof. T. WITTON DAVIES, M.A., Ph.D.
Vol. VII.	PROVERBS, ECCLESIASTES, AND SONG OF SOLOMON. Rev. Prof. G. CURRIE MARTIN, M.A., B.D., of the United College, Bradford. ISAIAH (Chaps. i-xxxix). Rev. Principal O. C. WHITEHOUSE, M.A., D.D., of Cheshunt College, Cambridge.
Vol. VIII.	ISAIAH (Chaps. xl-lxiii). Rev. Principal O. C. WHITEHOUSE, M.A., D.D JEREMIAH (Vol. I). Rev. Prof. PEAKE. M.A., D.D
Vol. IX.	JEREMIAH (Vol. II) AND LAMENTATIONS. Rev. Prof. PEAKE, M.A., D.D. EZEKIEL. Rev. Prof. W. F. LOFTHOUSE, M.A., of Handsworth College, Birmingham.
Vol. X.	MINOR PROPHETS: HOSEA, JOEL, AMOS, OBADIAH, JONAH, MICAH. Rev. R. F. HORTON, M.A., D.D., London. MINOR PROPHETS: NAHUM, HABAKKUK, ZEPHANIAH, ZECHARIAH, MALACHI. Rev. Prof. S. R. DRIVER, D.D., Litt.D., of the University of Oxford.
½ Vol. XI.	DANIEL. Rev. Prof. R. H. CHARLES, D.D., of the University of Dublin.

NEW TESTAMENT

Vol. I.	MATTHEW. Rev. Prof. SLATER, M.A., of Didsbury College, Author of 'The Faith and Life of the Early Church.' MARK. The late Rev. Principal SALMOND, D.D., Aberdeen.
Vol. II.	LUKE. Rev. Principal W. F. ADENEY, M.A., D.D., of Lancashire Independent College, Author of 'How to Read the Bible.' JOHN. Rev. J. A. McCLYMONT, D.D., Author of 'The New Testament and its Writers.'
Vol. III.	ACTS. Rev. Prof. J. VERNON BARTLETT, M.A., D.D., of Mansfield College, Oxford, Author of 'The Apostolic Age.' ROMANS. Rev. Principal A. E. GARVIE, M.A., D.D., of New College, and Hackney College, London.
Vol. IV.	I AND II CORINTHIANS. Prof. J. MASSIE, M.A., D.D., of Mansfield College, Oxford. PHILIPPIANS, EPHESIANS, COLOSSIANS, PHILEMON. Rev. Prof. G. CURRIE MARTIN, M.A., B.D.
Vol. V.	I AND II THESSALONIANS, GALATIANS. Rev. Principal ADENEY, M.A., D.D. THE PASTORAL EPISTLES. Rev. R. F. HORTON, M.A., D.D., London. HEBREWS. Rev. Prof. A. S. PEAKE, M.A., D.D.
Vol. VI.	THE GENERAL EPISTLES. Rev. Prof. W. H. BENNETT, M.A., D.D. REVELATION. Rev. Prof. C. ANDERSON SCOTT, M.A., B.D., of Westminster College, Cambridge.

THE CENTURY BIBLE

A MODERN COMMENTARY

EDITED BY

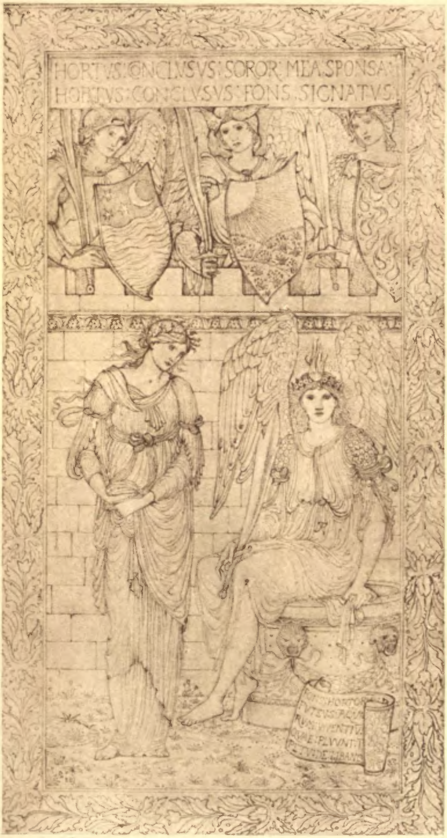
PRINCIPAL W. F. ADENEY, M.A., D.D.

PROVERBS, ECCLESIASTES SONG OF SONGS

EDITED BY

G. CURRIE MARTIN, M.A., B.D.

OXFORD
HORACE HART, PRINTER TO THE UNIVERSITY


HORTVS·CONCLVSVS·SOROR·MEA·SPONSA·
HORTVS·CONCLVSVS·FONS·SIGNATVS·

Photo, Fred Hollyer.

THE GARDEN ENCLOSED. [Song of Solomon IV, 12-15.]
BY SIR EDWARD BURNE-JONES, BART

The Century Bible
A MODERN COMMENTARY

Proverbs
Ecclesiastes
and
Song of Songs

INTRODUCTION
REVISED VERSION WITH NOTES
ILLUSTRATIONS

EDITED BY

G. CURRIE MARTIN, M.A., B.D.

PROFESSOR OF NEW TESTAMENT EXEGESIS, &c., IN
YORKSHIRE UNITED AND LANCASHIRE
INDEPENDENT COLLEGES

LONDON
THE CAXTON PUBLISHING COMPANY
CLUN HOUSE, SURREY STREET, W.C.

APR 29 1969

The R*EVISED* V*ERSION* *is printed by permission of the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge*

PREFATORY NOTE

THE Editor's indebtedness to various books will be found indicated in the sections on literature, and in the notes. To those who have thus afforded him so much indispensable help his thanks are gratefully rendered—not least to those from whose conclusions he has been compelled to differ. To three personal friends he wishes to express his most sincere gratitude—the Rev. Wm. Christie, of Aleppo, for valuable suggestions; the Rev. R. McKinley, M.A., New Pitsligo, for some illustrations from Scottish literature; and to H. Barnes, Esq., M.A., for the beautiful verse translation of the song quoted in the Appendix, and for many hints in the section dealing with the Song of Songs.

BRADFORD, *Sept.* 1908.

CONTENTS

PAGE

GENERAL INTRODUCTION 3

THE PROVERBS

INTRODUCTION 9

TEXT OF THE REVISED VERSION WITH ANNOTATIONS . 27

ECCLESIASTES

INTRODUCTION 211

TEXT OF THE REVISED VERSION WITH ANNOTATIONS . 221

THE SONG OF SONGS

INTRODUCTION 287

TEXT OF THE REVISED VERSION WITH ANNOTATIONS . 303

APPENDIX: ILLUSTRATIVE ORIENTAL POEMS . . . 357

INDEX 359

PLATES

THE GARDEN ENCLOSED (by Sir Ed. Burne-Jones, Bart.) *Photogravure Frontispiece*

EN-GANNIM (JENIN) in colour (Photochr. Co.) . . 48

SOLOMON'S POOLS (Photochr. Co.) 112

DAMASCUS (from a photograph) 176

TENTS OF KEDAR (from a photograph) 240

STREAM FROM LEBANON (from a photograph) . . 304

PROVERBS, ECCLESIASTES, SONG OF SONGS

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

PROVERBS, ECCLESIASTES, SONG OF SONGS

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

THE three books to be discussed in this volume may be said to constitute the lighter side of Jewish literature. Two of them are strictly poetic in form, while the third contains many passages of exquisite poetic prose. We are not to suppose, however, that all the lighter literature of the Hebrews is contained in these three books. We have folk-songs, for instance, in other books of the Old Testament. Notable examples are to be found in Gen. iv. 23, 'The Song of Lamech'; Gen. xlix, 'The Blessing of Jacob'; Num. xxi. 16–18, 'The Song of the Well'; Num. xxi. 27–30, 'The Triumph over Heshbon.' Admirable examples of the popular and sometimes humorous tales are to be found in the stories of Samson, Gideon, the youthful adventures of David, and many similar narratives. Lyrics of exceeding beauty occur among the Psalms, in the pages of Isaiah, and in the Book of Lamentations, while a lovely example of a popular idyll is to be found in the Book of Ruth, and a romantic novel, founded upon fact, in the Book of Esther. Outside the borders of the O. T. there exist numerous examples of literature similar to that we have been describing in the collection of books known as the Apocrypha, where in the Books of Tobit and Judith are examples of popular tales, while Ecclesiasticus and the Wisdom of Solomon stand very close in thought and character to the Book of Proverbs. The three books with which we have immediately to deal are very distinct in character, the one being either a long and elaborate lyrical poem on the passion of love, or a collection of such tender lyrics. The longest of the three consists of many separate poems, some being epigrams that remind us of many contained in the Greek Anthology. These deal with all sorts of circumstances in daily life, being occasionally full of humour and satire, and at other moments their beauty reminds us of the description of the fitting word contained in one of them, viz. 'golden apples hid in silvery foliage.' The third book is in many ways the most difficult. It consists of the reflections of a man of philosophic temper, who, in many of his moods, seems far removed from the general character of the writers of scripture, and yet by his very strangeness is intensely attractive, since even his somewhat gloomy pessimism strikes a sympathetic note in most hearts.

In the Hebrew scriptures the books here dealt with are not classified together. They all, indeed, belong to the third great division of those scriptures, which was known by the title of 'Writings' or 'Hagiographa,' but two of them, the *Song of Songs* and *Ecclesiastes*, are contained in a subdivision of the latter called the Five *Megilloth* or 'Rolls,' which were appointed to be read in the synagogue services at certain fixed seasons—the *Song of Songs* at the Passover, and *Ecclesiastes* at the Feast of Tabernacles.

Apart from its general poetic form (a subject which will be discussed later, see pp. 13–16), there is very little within the O.T. scriptures that can be compared at all closely with the Song of Songs. The only direct comparison that is possible is the beautiful marriage-song contained in Ps. xlv. It is probably based in its present form upon such popular wedding-songs as we shall see underlie the Song of Songs itself, and much of its imagery, and even language, are to be found in that work; cf. Ps. xlv. 7:

> 'Therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee
> With the oil of gladness above thy fellows'

with Song of Songs iii. 11. Again, the eighth verse of the psalm, speaking of the fragrance of the bridegroom's garments, uses the names of the same spices that are mentioned in Song of Songs iv. 14, while the description of 'ivory palaces' and 'kings' daughters' as among the bride's attendants, and the other accompaniments of a wedding procession, remind us strongly of the longer poem. But the resemblances are most close when we come to the actual picture of the bride's own adornment as given in verses 13 and 14 of the psalm :

> 'The king's daughter within is all glorious :
> Her clothing is inwrought with gold.
> She shall be led unto the king, clad in embroidered raiment :
> The virgins her companions that follow her
> Shall be brought unto thee.'

In the beauty of its poetic imagery, as well as in the variety and sweetness of its expression, the Song of Songs is unrivalled in Hebrew literature. Born of the soil, it has been taken up by some skilful poet, and given such literary form that it has become 'a thing of beauty and a joy for ever.' There is one peculiar practice of the Arab poets, pointed out to the present writer by the Rev. W. Christie, of Aleppo, which probably throws light upon some of the most discussed passages in the poem. This is the habit, so strange as to seem almost unintelligible to us, of being quite careless about the gender of the pronouns employed, so that an Arab lover may be singing his lady-love's praises in language that to the uninitiated reader appears to be the description of male beauty and perfections.

PROVERBS

INTRODUCTION

AND

REVISED VERSION WITH ANNOTATIONS

PROVERBS

INTRODUCTION

WHEN we turn to the Book of Proverbs, we find ourselves in a different atmosphere from that of any other book in the Hebrew O.T. The nearest resemblance to it is in certain sections of the Book of Ecclesiastes, particularly parts of chaps. iv, v, and vii. But in the Greek version of the O.T. there are two books which stand in close relation with this one, namely, the *Wisdom of Solomon*, and the *Wisdom of the Son of Sirach*, commonly called *Ecclesiasticus*. Many illustrations from both of these will be found in the notes contained in this commentary. The proverbial style of utterance is not common in our Western literature, but is a favourite form among Easterns. Every people has its own collection of popular proverbs, which pass from lip to lip and embody much of the current wisdom gained by experience. Some such origin may be the true one of many of the sayings in this book, but the majority of them at least emanate from the schools of professional teachers, and if they came at first from the lips of the people, they have been altered and modified so that the stamp of the professional teacher lies upon them. In English our closest resemblances to this style of writing are to be found in certain essays of Lord Bacon, and in *Some Fruits of Solitude*, by William Penn, though the aphoristic form is not absent from the pages of Emerson, and an excellent collection of both pithy and literary proverbs might be culled from the novels of George Meredith. In one case he definitely sets himself to create such a series in the famous 'Pilgrim's Scrip,' that lends a special flavour to the

Ordeal of Richard Feverel. But even when he is not specially setting himself to write in the form of proverbs, his style crystalizes into the type of literary expression which is most akin to them.

The book naturally possesses much less of a formal construction than any other book in the O.T., save the Book of Psalms, and it probably covers a very long period of history in the various collections that go to make it up. Traditionally, the authorship of the main part of the book is attributed to Solomon, but we have evidences within the book itself that this is not to be universally applicable even on the assumption of the editors themselves, for at the beginning of the twenty-fifth chapter a new section begins with the statement, 'These also are proverbs of Solomon which the men of Hezekiah king of Judah copied out.' Though this statement attributes the further collection thus introduced to Solomon, it also reveals the fact that the work of later editors was recognized upon it, and probably signifies that independent work was done by these later hands. Again, we have the sections contained in chaps. xxx and xxxi, which are attributed to different authors, and the anonymous section beginning at xxiv. 23. We can see, further, that some indication of other hands being at work upon the book was in the minds of the editors of it in its present form, from the beginning of chap. x, which gives the simple heading 'the proverbs of Solomon,' an unnecessary addition in the light of the first verse of the first chapter, which has already entitled the whole work 'the proverbs of Solomon the son of David, king of Israel.' Probably the oldest part of the book is the section containing proverbs proper, that extends from x. 1 to xxii. 16. In these chapters we have the best examples of the various forms of the proverb, of which we shall have presently to speak, and there is no difficulty in believing that many of them descend from a great antiquity, probably long before the days of Solomon. It is difficult to tell whether much stress is to be laid upon his traditional connexion with the proverbial literature. We are told that in his own day he uttered 'three thousand proverbs' (1 Kings iv. 32), but this is very likely the admiring comment of a later generation about one whose phenomenal wisdom had long before become the subject of popular legend, though it is quite conceivable that Solomon had been the first to gather round him a school of sages, and may even have encouraged them to produce definite systems of teaching. The next division of the book extends from xxii. 17 to xxiv. 22, and is perfectly anonymous.

Its opening verses contain a short prefatory note (xxii. 17–21), and the bulk of the collection is concerned with counsels that relate in the main to the risks of riches and luxury, and may date, therefore, from the late period of the Greek control of Palestine. The third collection is contained in chap. xxiv. 23–34, and is simply entitled 'sayings of the wise.' It contains a few general proverbs, and the parable of the sluggard's vineyard. There is nothing in it very indicative of date, though the parable has a strong resemblance to chap. vi. 6–11, and is probably based upon it. The short collection may, therefore, be later than that chapter. Next comes the section above referred to as traditionally attributed to the days of Hezekiah in its present form, consisting of chaps. xxv–xxix. It is impossible to say whether Hezekiah had anything whatever to do with the collection, though, according to one recent writer (*Old Testament Problems*, by J. W. Thirtle), Hezekiah played a much larger part in the literary activity of the O. T. than has generally been supposed. The only certain conclusion that can be drawn from the statement, as it stands, is that, in the judgement of the editors, the collection is later than those which precede it, but even this is doubtful; for, as the notes will show, there are many parallelisms between it and the earlier chapters, and some of them show that the borrowing may more likely have been on the part of the writers of the proverbs now found in the earlier part of the book. Chapters xxx and xxxi stand apart from the rest of the book, and are recognized by the editors as being of quite separate authorship. (For the difficulty of the interpretation of the headings see the notes on these chapters.) But it is perfectly clear from considerations of language, as well as of literary form, that they are later than the main sections of the book we have been hitherto considering. In chap. xxxi is contained an acrostic poem (verses 10–31), which has really nothing parallel to it anywhere else in the book, and may have been quite accidentally added by some scribe who felt that it embodied some of the ideals of practical wisdom that had been already inculcated, or may, indeed, have been written by some poet who was himself the final editor. We have hitherto left unnoticed the great introductory section consisting of chaps. i–ix, though there should be excluded from it two passages which seem to have been accidentally introduced into the section, probably through the carelessness of scribes, viz. vi. 1–19, ix. 7–12. This great section stands most closely allied to the later books of Wisdom above referred to, and is really a long poem upon the nature and characteristics of Wisdom, who is regarded as a person, and almost, at times, identified with the Divine Spirit. It shows, therefore, both in its language and thought, the mark of a later age, and is the finest, as it may also be the first, of those superb poems, which in a later and more reflective period of Israel's history, sang the praises of the Wisdom of God.

It will be apparent from the above sketch how difficult it is to date with any definite accuracy the various sections of the book, and, as a matter of fact, scholars differ exceedingly in their deductions from the above data. The main grounds for a decision are the obviously uncertain ones of thought and language. For the thought, the book is brought into comparison with Job and Ecclesiastes on the one hand, and the later Wisdom books on the other, but interpreters differ as to whether we should reckon the somewhat sceptical tendencies of the other two canonical books as bearing witness to an earlier or later date than the more definite teaching of the Book of Proverbs. With the exception of the few verses in chap. xxx, the interpretation of which is doubtful, we have nothing that can be remotely suspected of the sceptical attitude in this work, and it seems more probable that there were two streams of thought that ran concurrently for several centuries, and represented different schools, to which we might apply the vivid, picturesque, and modern terminology of Professor William James, and describe them as the 'tough-minded' and 'tender-minded' thinkers of ancient Palestine, the former concerning themselves mainly with the practical questions of everyday life, and the latter apt to lose themselves in the morasses of metaphysical speculation.

The argument from language is, of course, much more subtle and difficult, and also nearly impossible to present to the English reader, and for an examination of it one must be referred to the larger commentaries that deal with the original (for example, Toy, pp. xxiv-xxxi), and the English reader may regret less the absence of the discussion on being told that no very definite conclusion can be reached by its help. There are, of course, certain broad lines on which scholars have no hesitation, as, for example, in saying that in the later chapters there are many usages and words which definitely point to the later period of the Hebrew language, i. e. to the second or third centuries B. C.

The next matter to be considered is the external form of the proverbs. These are, of course, in the main poetical, though here and there, as will be indicated in the notes, prose passages occur. The significant form of Hebrew poetry is what is known as parallelism, and that is sufficiently clear to any reader on opening almost at random any poetic book.. Take, for example, the Psalm cxix. At the fifteenth verse we read:

'I will meditate in thy precepts,
And have respect unto thy ways.'

Here the parallelism is exact between the two clauses, there being only a slight variation between the two verbs and the two nouns, which practically state the same truth in the balanced clauses under a slightly different form. Similar examples are found in verses 59, 105, &c.

Or, again, the parallelism consists in the second clause emphasizing one of the statements of the first, and extending it, as, for example, verse 41:

'Let thy mercies also come unto me, O Lord,
Even thy salvation, according to thy word.'

For this type of verse cf. further verses 63, 89, 103, &c.

A very favourite form is that of contrast, see verse 23:

'Princes also sat and talked against me:
But thy servant did meditate in thy statutes.'

See further verses 51, 61, 67, &c.

Sometimes the parallel clause contains a reason for the statement made in the first clause. See verse 50:

'This is my comfort in my affliction:
For thy word hath quickened me.'

See further verses 66, 77, 91, &c.

All these types of parallelism are to be found in the Book of Proverbs, and for rapid and clear reference one may here be permitted to quote the admirable paragraph on the subject contained in Toy's Introduction, p. x: 'The form of the parallelism varies in the different sections. In I. it may be said to be, in accordance with the tone of the discourses, wholly synonymous; the apparent exceptions are iii. 27–35, ix. 8, all occurring in misplaced or doubtful paragraphs. II. divides itself into two parts: in chaps. x–xv the form is antithetic, in xvi–xxii. 16 the couplets are mostly comparisons and single sentences, with a few antitheses. III. is made up of synonymous lines, except xxiv. 16. IV. shows a division into two parts: in chapters xxv–xxvii we find comparisons and single sentences, except in xxv. 2, xxvii. 6, 7, 12, which contains antitheses, while in chapters xxviii, xxix the two forms are nearly equal in number (thirty-three antithetic couplets, twenty-two comparisons and single sentences). In V. the parallelism is, with a few exceptions (see xxx. 12, 24–28, xxxi. 30), synonymous.' Further kinds of parallelism have been distinguished under such names as *Stair-like* (see Ps. xxiv. 8, xxv. 1) and *Introverted* (see Ps. xxx. 9–11).

It may be said that the parallelism that we have been discussing is the fundamental principle of Hebrew poetry, and perhaps also of the poetry of other Semitic peoples, as the same phenomenon has been discovered in the poetic writings of Assyria and Babylonia, and, according to some writers, also in Egypt. But beyond the mere matter of parallelism there are also certain signs used in the Hebrew manuscripts to designate verses, that is in the technical poetical sense, very much what we should call couplets, and it seems further possible to divide these couplets in the majority of instances into their individual lines. Into the more intricate question of metre, it is impossible to go without a knowledge of the original language. Anything corresponding to our idea of rhyme is very rare, if it occurs at all, and certainly this could never have played any determining part in the form of Hebrew poetry. Budde believes that he has found the main standard of criticism in what he calls the *Kinah* measure. This means the verse in which laments were written, and is that found largely in the Book of Lamentations. It may be roughly described as a sort of elegiac verse, similar to the Latin pentameter in which so many of the poems of Ovid are written. For a more detailed account of this matter the reader is referred to the article 'Poetry' in the fourth volume of Hastings' *DB.* Of the main divisions into which Budde there divides poetry, namely, folk-poetry, the poetry of the prophets, and artistic poetry, the three books contained in this volume come under the latter head, the Song of Songs being a lyric, the Book of Proverbs being a specimen of gnomic poetry, while Ecclesiastes is described as a philosophical didactic poem, but in the latter, either through defective text or for other reasons, the poetic form is frequently defective. (The reader may further compare on this subject the article 'Poetical Literature' in *Enc. Bib.* and the Introduction to 'The Psalms' in the *Int. Crit. Com.*, by Dr. Briggs, vol. i, pp. xxxiv-xlviii, or in *Century Bible*, vol. i, pp. 30–9.)

Before proceeding to a consideration of the system of thought contained in the Books of Proverbs and Ecclesiastes, there is a further external matter in connexion with the former book requiring notice, namely, the form of the text that is represented by the LXX. The first remarkable feature about the latter is the different order in which certain sections of the book are contained in it. The following comparative table represents the differences in the arrangement of the two texts:

E. V.	LXX.
xxiv. 22.	xxiv. 22, 23. In addition to the translation of what stands as verse 22 in Hebrew and English, the LXX has additional clauses, for the translation of which see the notes on the passage.
xxx. 1–14.	xxiv. 24–37.
xxiv. 23–34.	xxiv. 38–49.
xxx. 15–33.	xxiv. 50–68.
xxxi. 1–9.	xxiv. 69–77.
xxv. 1—xxix. 27.	xxv. 1—xxix. 27.
xxxi. 10–31.	xxix. 28–49.

In addition to these large sections of variation there are frequently short additions in the LXX, the main examples of which will be noted in the Commentary where they occur (see e.g. iii. 16, iv. 27, ix. 12). On the other hand, there are occasional verses omitted by the LXX, e.g. xviii. 23, 24, xx. 14-19. Many times the LXX varies greatly from the Hebrew, either by misunderstanding the text or by having had something different from the Hebrew we now possess. On occasions we find obvious additions or interpretations which seem clearly to be reflections of the Greek scribe, or endeavours to make clearer statements which he found obscure. In other instances the LXX inserts a verse a second time that has already appeared in an earlier part of the book. Two features of the translation are noted by Frankenberg as characteristic, and which mark it out from the LXX translation of other parts of the O.T. First, that for well-known Hebrew expressions, which are elsewhere always rendered consistently by the same Greek word, different words are employed in this book, and, secondly, the great freedom that the translator has allowed himself, so great as many times to amount to an inaccurate paraphrase. A very probable explanation of some of these features is that, while in the case of the law, and even to some extent the prophets, there existed a somewhat fixed oral tradition in the Greek language, there was nothing of that sort in the case of Proverbs, and the translator was compelled to find his own way towards a true solution of the many difficulties that beset him. The LXX version, it is well known, is that generally employed by the N.T. writers, and traces of its use in this book are not difficult to find. From a list given by Plumptre the following examples are taken :—Prov. iii. 34, cf. Jas. iv. 6; Prov. iv. 26, cf. Heb. xii. 13; Prov. xiii. 7, cf. 2 Cor. vi. 10; Prov. xxvii. 1, cf. Jas. iv. 14-16. Other examples will be found in the Commentary itself.

When we turn finally to the ideas rather than to the language of the book, we find ourselves in the realm of what is known as the Hebrew Wisdom literature. This is represented in the main by the Books of *Job*, *Proverbs*, *Ecclesiastes*, *Ecclesiasticus*, *Wisdom of Solomon*, *The Sayings of the Jewish Fathers*; certain of the *Psalms* show traces of the same school of teaching (notably the Psalms viii. 19, xix, xxix, xxxvii, xlix, lxxiii, civ, cvii, cxii, cxix, cxxxix). The chronological order of these writings is not easy to settle, but probably Job is the earliest, at least the original form of Job. Next may come some of the Psalms, and the earliest sections of Proverbs. Whether Ecclus. or Eccles. in its earliest form holds the prior place is difficult to decide, but Eccles. as we now know it is possibly the later of the two. To the latest age of all belong the early chapters of Proverbs and the Book of Wisdom, while some of the earliest of the *Sayings of the Jewish Fathers* mark the transition to another type of Hebrew literature, that, viz. with which we are familiar in the Talmud. The writers of the Wisdom literature were a recognized class in the Hebrew community, and we find them frequently referred to in the pages of the O.T. In one passage they are clearly marked off from the other two great classes of religious teachers. In Jer. xviii. 18 we read, 'The law shall not perish from the priest, nor counsel from the wise, nor the word from the prophet,' from which we see that they occupied a definite and recognized position in the religious community. There seems to have been considerable rivalry between them and the prophets, or else the class of wise men referred to in the pages of the prophetic books must have been only charlatans, and have occupied a somewhat similar place in the schools to what the false prophets did in the prophetic guilds. See, for example, such references as Jer. viii. 8, 'How do ye say, We are wise, and the law of the Lord is with us? But, behold, the false pen of the scribes hath wrought falsely. The wise men are ashamed, they are dismayed and taken: lo, they have rejected the word of the Lord; and what manner of wisdom is in them?' (Cf. also xxix. 8-14.)

If the latter passage is rightly dated as belonging to the period of the reign of Hezekiah, it is illuminating to remember that a section of Proverbs (see xxv. 1) is attributed to the men of Hezekiah's day, so that we may here be listening to a prophet's estimate of the worth of their work. Probably the opposition arose from similar causes to those which have given rise to misunderstanding in almost every generation between idealists and men with a purely practical outlook upon life. The philosopher has so often scorned the politician, and the man of religious fervour despised the speculative thinker, that we need not be surprised to find the same state of affairs in the society of the Jerusalem of Isaiah and his followers. On the other hand, when we turn to the testimony of the wise men themselves we find just as lofty and gracious aims and achievements among them as are discovered in the pages of the prophets. Some of the Psalms, to which reference has already been made, amply prove this, as e.g. the whole attitude of the Psalm cxix; but the most famous passage is that found in Ecclus. xxxix. 1–11, which should be carefully read.

It is a passage which sets before us both the ideals and the limitations of the sages. We notice in the first place that there are certain ultimate questions with which they never dealt, for example, the existence of God. For the Hebrew sage that was regarded as a necessary axiom. Into the origin of moral evil it was also impossible for the Hebrew sage to enter, but his greatest difficulty was to reconcile the Divine government of life with the obvious inequalities in the lot of man. That is a problem that constitutes the main interest of the Book of Job, and that recurs in various forms in Eccles. The sage appears also to have been a traveller; and here we discover what some of these books indeed clearly indicate, that many of the ideas and forms of expression found in them were derived from other nations, especially from Persian and Greek sources. The practical character of his researches, and the effect these produce in giving him excellent opportunities for self-advancement in politics and statecraft, is also referred to here, and will frequently come before us in the pages of Proverbs and Eccles. The nature of the wise man's piety is further indicated as being mainly a subjection of his own will to the Divine will, an idea which is well expressed in a verse that we shall find may be regarded as the motto of the Book of Proverbs—'The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.' This Ecclus. passage also contains the clear consciousness of the sage that his work will be enduring.[1] Like the Roman poet, he is certain that he is erecting for himself a memorial which shall be more permanent than brass, a consciousness which has been common to many of the great minds of the world, and was expressed by our Lord Himself in the memorable words, 'Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away'—a saying that may even find its origin in the very passage we are considering.

It appears as if the traditional source of the Hebrew wisdom were the land of Edom, for in Jer. xlix. 7 we read, in an oracle that refers to that nation, 'Is wisdom no more in Teman? Is counsel perished from the prudent? Is their wisdom vanished?' And again in Obadiah, verse 8, we have the words, 'Shall I not . . . destroy the wise men out of Edom, and understanding out of the mount of Esau?' From this quarter also the Book of Job brings his friends who are the supporters of the traditional wisdom. Just what significance is to be attached to these hints it is not easy to determine, but if recent speculation as to the sources of the Israelitish nation being discoverable in the district to which Edom belongs are correct, then we may see in these passages a witness on the part of her teachers to the real sources of her later knowledge. In Ezek. xxviii. 3 there is a reference to the great wisdom of Tyre, an indication that in matters of practical wisdom and commercial prudence, which are subjects largely dealt with in the Book of Proverbs, the kingdom of Tyre may well have been one of Israel's greatest instructors.

---

[1] 'Many shall commend his understanding;
And, so long as the world endureth, it shall not be blotted out.'

Further influences may have reached the Jewish people from Persian sources, and in this direction Ezra and his new religious movement must have played a large part. But the Scribes, who were the descendants of Ezra, were not, apparently, the same class as the sages. The latter Cheyne believes to have been organized into a guild in pre-exilic times. They appear to have been the great movers in education, so far as we can judge from the Book of Proverbs itself, and the many references that it contains to teacher and pupil, and to the education of children (see ix. 1–4, xiii. 1, &c.). In the later Book of Ecclus. we find further references to the sages as public instructors, e.g. in vi. 36 we read the counsel, 'If thou seest a man of understanding, get thee betimes unto him, and let thy foot wear out the steps of his doors.' These professional teachers may have taken fees for their instruction, as did the Greek sophists, for we find a reference in Ecclus. li. 28, which seems to indicate that such was a well-known practice, 'Get you instruction with a great sum of silver'; but that the investment was supposed to be profitable the subsequent words of the clause prove, for they read 'and gain much gold by her.' Can it be that the prophets are once more girding at their rivals when they speak as the prophet does in Isa. lv. 1, 'Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters; and he that hath no money, come ye, buy, and eat?'

The basis of all the teaching was, apparently, revelation and human experience, the one illuminating the other. We do not find many direct references in the work of the sages to the record of revelation, but we can see that they regarded it as the ultimate foundation. Wisdom, however, is so practical a thing that it must be reducible to terms of everyday conduct before it can be of any value, even to the religious man. In something of the Greek spirit, knowledge and morality are identified. Thus it comes to pass that the wise man is synonymous with the practical sage, and the man of wicked life with the fool. This glorification of wisdom found a new outcome in certain sections of the literature we are now discussing. In Job xxviii it is praised in language of the highest poetry, and we are told that God alone knoweth the place thereof. In Proverbs viii Wisdom is personified and spoken of as the companion of the Almighty, and the onlooker of the Creation—as one, indeed, who may almost be described as a child with whom the Maker of all things delighted to share the joy of His work. The description in Ecclus. xxiv may be earlier than the one just quoted from Proverbs. There we are told that Wisdom is the first of the created things, and is practically identical with the Jewish law. The Book of Wisdom goes much further and describes Wisdom as 'a breath of the power of God, a clear effluence of the glory of the Almighty, an effulgence from everlasting light, an unspotted mirror of the working of God, an image of His goodness' (cf. vii. 25, 26). In this book Wisdom is given creative functions, and is clearly the forerunner of the later idea of the Logos. We can see, therefore, the development of the idea that obedience to the Divine will can only be finally reached in a person who is absolutely at one with it. What started as an ideal of righteousness concludes with the creation of a person who embodies that ideal, and thus, we may say, prepares the way for the doctrine of Christ, who was Himself both the embodiment of the Divine righteousness and the Power who made its fulfilment possible to all who believed in Him.

It may seem to many readers a great descent from such high conceptions to the motives for righteousness so frequently set before us in the pages of Proverbs. Men have often spoken of the book as if it were simply a series of directions as to how to get on well in business life. As a matter of fact, it accepts in the main the general O.T. creed that prosperity was the proof of Divine protection and approval, and that success in life was a sufficient motive for righteous conduct. But then we have to remember that success, thus understood, implied God's acceptance of the individual, for without such acceptance the end could not be attained. This creed, as we have seen, had many severe blows struck at it by the obvious inequalities of the lots of the righteous and the wicked, and a new creed arose in the later days of Judaism that spoke of the resurrection, and promised that the inequalities of the present life would be set right in the next. Koheleth seems to have been sceptical about the truth of this teaching, and we shall find in his pages traces of his dissatisfaction with it. But the later Book of Wisdom preaches the doctrine of immortality (see iii. 1–9, i. 13–16, &c.), and so clears the way for that belief with which the people were conversant in the time of Christ. There is one striking feature of Judaism that is altogether absent from the Wisdom literature, namely, the golden age that had been the subject of much of the prophetic teaching, and which formed the basis of the Apocalyptic visions. Apparently the sages were not impressed by this type of thought, and left it aside in all their teaching and ideas.

The majority of this group of writers might have made their own the language of Browning's painter:

> 'This world 's no blot for us
> Nor blank; it means intensely, and means good:
> To find its meaning is my meat and drink.'

A general happy contentment with life appears in the pages of Proverbs, and in several passages of Eccles. Indeed, it appears to have been the latter's sanest mood, and is perhaps his most significant teaching for all time, that life is in itself a sane and healthy thing, and that man cannot do better than make a wise use of its opportunities.

The Wisdom literature played a large part in the later history both of the Jewish and the Christian Church. In the former it gave rise to much of the Rabbinic teaching, especially its parables and paradoxes, and may very well have inspired the mediaeval Jews in their return to philosophical studies when they became for a time the leading exponents of the new learning. In the Christian Church we find its influence first most prominent in the Epistle of James, but both on the lips of our Lord and in the pages of Paul traces of the Wisdom literature are not difficult to discover. Philosophical writers such as Clement of Alexandria were very familiar with it, and, in a book that he designed as a practical handbook for Christian disciples, Augustine drew from Ecclus. a larger proportion of the quotations than he did from the Gospel of Matthew itself. Augustine's great follower, Luther, had an immense admiration for the book, and reckoned it far more important than many that have a place in the Canon. Many of our older English divines quote it with much familiarity, and it will not be forgotten by the readers of English fiction that it was a favourite book with Adam Bede. 'On some mornings,' writes George Eliot, 'when he read in the Apocrypha, of which he was very fond, the Son of Sirach's keen-edged words would bring a delighted smile.' The Book of Proverbs used to play a large part in the education of every Scottish youth, for it was generally learned by heart in every school, and its influence upon the Scottish character has undoubtedly been deep and lasting. Ruskin tells us that among the chapters which he was compelled by his mother to commit to memory were four from Proverbs, namely, chapters ii, iii, viii, and xii. In a letter in *Fors* (letter 53) he makes a selection from chaps. xv and xvi of the Book of Wisdom, with the introductory remark that these verses appear to him to reach to the roots, not only of political institutions, but of many other hitherto hidden things.

[On the Wisdom literature in general the reader may profitably consult the articles on the Wisdom literature in the *Enc. Bib.*, and that on Wisdom in Hastings' *DB.*, as well as the articles in each dictionary on the individual books named. Further, the *Hebrew Literature of Wisdom*, by Genung, will be found a very interesting and suggestive introduction to the whole subject, as it consists of a series of lectures, and so maintains something of its popular character, while it is full of many excellent literary illustrations. Another good popular handbook is *The Wisdom Literature of the O.T.*, by W. T. Davison, which contains an account of the nature and teaching of the three Wisdom books contained in the O.T., and also of the Song of Songs. More advanced students should consult Cheyne's *Job and Solomon*, and for an entirely different point of view Dillon's *Sceptics of the O.T.*]

LITERATURE FOR PROVERBS.

The most convenient commentary for the English reader is that by Perowne in the *Cambridge Bible*. The notes are, on the whole, excellent, and many good illustrations are contained in them, besides translations of the most important additions in the LXX. In the *Speakers' Commentary* there is a very suggestive commentary, rich in illustrative material, by Plumptre. The largest and most important English commentary is that of Toy in the International Critical series. Everything requisite for the full understanding of the book can be found there. The articles in the *Bible Dictionary* should also be consulted. For illustrations from the proverbs of other nations, Malan's two volumes of *Notes on Proverbs* are invaluable. The older commentary of Delitzsch, though founded on the Hebrew text, and full of technical material, has still much value for the ordinary reader, and many interesting points may be found in Trench's *Proverbs and their Lessons.* Dr. Horton's volume in *The Expository Bible* is very suggestive on the teaching of the book, and he there groups together sections that are similar in subject. Of German books the most useful are the commentaries of Nowack, Wildeboer, and Frankenberg: the two latter have been found of great service in the preparation of the present work.

THE PROVERBS

THE proverbs of Solomon the son of David, king of Israel: 1
To know wisdom and instruction; 2
To discern the words of understanding;

---

i. **1. proverbs.** On the general question of the relation of this title to the literary character of the whole book, see the Introduction, p. 10. But the word rendered 'proverbs' means something between a comparison and a parable, and in its Greek equivalent is sometimes rendered by either English word (cf. John xvi. 25 with the marginal reading). For its further use in the O. T. see Ezek. xiv. 8; Isa. xiv. 4. It will thus be seen that the word either applies to the short and pithy sentences to which we generally give the name of Proverbs, and which constitute the larger part of this book, or to longer and more fully developed similes, such as those that occur in the first nine chapters, and are found in other parts of the Bible.

2. To know wisdom. From verses 2 to 6 the writer gives an extended title, or, more accurately, a detailed explanation of his title, the recurring infinitives being designed to express the purpose of the Proverbs, and the words in which this is set forth are those which recur frequently throughout the book. These verses are like the overture of an opera, which suggests the themes that are afterwards to be developed in detail. In particular is 'wisdom' the central conception, not only of this book, but of the whole class of literature to which it belongs (see Introduction, p. 17 ff.).

instruction. The word which is rendered in the Latin version *disciplina*, and sometimes in our version 'chastening,' conveys the idea that all true knowledge involves an element of suffering—'there is no gain except by loss.'

discern. This gives a further idea of examining into the terms of truth, a very necessary lesson in every mental process. If words are not to remain mere counters for us, we must be skilled in clearly apprehending their respective meanings, and no lessons are better worth learning than those which come by such a process. As Perowne phrases it, 'penetration is an integral part of wisdom.'

3 To receive instruction in wise dealing,
In righteousness and judgement and equity;
4 To give [a] subtilty to the simple,
To the young man knowledge and discretion:
5 That the wise man may hear, and increase in learning;
And that the man of understanding may attain unto sound counsels:
6 To understand a proverb, and [b] a figure;
The words of the wise, and their [c] dark sayings.

7 The fear of the LORD is the [d] beginning of knowledge:

[a] Or, *prudence* [b] Or, *an interpretation*
[c] Or, *riddles* [d] Or, *chief part*

---

3. wise dealing. In this verse we turn to the practical aspects of wisdom. In modern language to ethics, rather than to intellectual processes.

4. subtilty. The word is here used in a good sense, meaning 'discrimination,' and may be best illustrated, perhaps, by our Lord's words, in Matt. x. 16, of combining the wisdom of the serpent with the innocence of the dove.

5. sound counsels. The figure that underlies the word is that of steering a vessel, and this latter metaphor is carried out in both the Greek and Latin versions.

6. figure. This word only occurs once again in the O. T., Hab. ii. 6, where it is rendered 'taunting proverb,' and probably means a satire. The idea may be that it requires great wisdom properly to interpret satirical writing in order to avoid being embittered by such sayings. There is a danger lest the reader should rest satisfied with the obvious meaning of the language, and not penetrate to its underlying significance.

dark sayings. This is better rendered with the margin 'riddles.' We find many instances of these in the following chapters of this book, and the same word is employed in Ezek. xvii. 2, in which place it is translated 'riddle.'

7. The fear of the LORD. This verse may be said to constitute the motto of the whole book; and the words occur again in ix. 10; Ps. cxi. 10; Ecclus. i. 14, and in almost similar form in Job xxviii. 28. Cf. also Ps. xix. 7–9. We may say, therefore, that the thought was a fundamental one in Hebrew philosophy, and that it stands fittingly here at the outset of a treatise whose object is to set forth the great principles and practice of that

But the foolish despise wisdom and instruction.
My son, hear the instruction of thy father, 8
And forsake not the [a] law of thy mother:
For they shall be a chaplet of grace unto thy head, 9
And chains about thy neck.
My son, if sinners entice thee, 10
Consent thou not.

[a] Or, *teaching*

---

system[1]. Wildeboer notes that a similar practice is found in Arabic collections.

beginning. As the margin suggests, this can also be rendered 'the chief part,' and the idea not only of priority but of primary importance is probably contained in the expression. The LXX adds here the words that are found in the second clause of Ps. cxi. 10, probably quoting that passage.

foolish. Here for the first time we come upon the contrast which persists throughout the book. The literal meaning of the word is 'fat,' a figure which is frequently employed in Hebrew for stupidity; see Ps. cxix. 70. Another word for fool is found in verse 22 of this chapter, the root-meaning of which is very similar, and denotes, as does this word, 'sluggishness.' The Scottish proverb puts the truth well, '"*Fling-at-the gaud*" (goad) was ne'er a wise ox.'

8. My son. This form of address recurs constantly throughout the book, and denotes the attitude of pupil and teacher. It implies the right to instruct, and brings before us the picture of one who assumed the law as the common basis of instruction.

9. chaplet. This figure is again introduced in iv. 9, with which compare Song of Songs iii. 11; Ecclus. vi. 29-32. Fairer than all possible outward adornment is the inward beauty of the heart; cf. 1 Pet. iii. 3, 4.

chains. Cf. Song of Songs i. 10 and note.

10. sinners. The word has a special significance in this passage, and seems to denote the rough and rude bands of robbers who infested Palestine at every period of her history. An excellent description of their methods is found in Ps. x. 8-11. It is not possible, therefore, to use these verses as pointing to any one period of the history so as to fix the date of the passage.

---

[1] Cf. a Jewish saying, 'A man with wisdom but without the fear of Heaven is like a man with the key of an inner court, but unable to enter because he has not the key of the outer court'; see Taylor's *Sayings of the Jewish Fathers*, p. 49.

11 If they say, Come with us,
Let us lay wait for blood,
Let us lurk privily for the innocent without cause;
12 Let us swallow them up alive as [a] Sheol,
[b] And whole, as those that go down into the pit;
13 We shall find all precious substance,
We shall fill our houses with spoil;
14 [c] Thou shalt cast thy lot among us;
We will all have one purse:
15 My son, walk not thou in the way with them;
Refrain thy foot from their path:
16 For their feet run to evil,
And they make haste to shed blood.

[a] Or, *the grave* [b] Or, *Even the perfect* [c] Or, *Cast in thy lot*

---

11. for blood. This signifies robbery with violence. The phrase 'a man of blood' is a common one in the O.T. to denote a violent man (cf. Ps. xxvi. 9, &c.), and the same phrase as is found here occurs again in xii. 6. A slight alteration in the text has been suggested, which would make it read, 'Let us lay wait for the perfect,' but this is not essential, though Toy thinks the parallelism demands it.

without cause. These words must be taken in close connexion with the verb, that is, the robbers have no reason for interference with those for whom they lie in wait, save, of course, their own selfish and cruel purpose.

12. Let us swallow them up. The destruction that the robbers plot is to be as thorough as that of the grave, and the meaning is perfectly clear, even if we place with some the word 'alive' in close connexion with Sheol, that is, as Sheol swallows up alive.

whole. This is to be taken as of physical perfection. Men who at one moment are in their full strength are the next to be in the realms of death.

13. We shall find. This verse states the temptation that the robbers present to their recruit in order to induce him to join their ranks.

14. Thou shalt cast thy lot. They hold out the prospect to him that he will be one with them; but we know that the honour of thieves is a risky thing to which to trust.

16. This verse is omitted by the LXX, but occurs in that version

For in vain [a] is the net spread, 17
In the eyes of any bird:
And these lay wait for their own blood, 18
They lurk privily for their own lives.
So are the ways of every one that is greedy of gain; 19
It taketh away the life of the owners thereof.

Wisdom crieth aloud in the street; 20
She uttereth her voice in the broad places;

[a] Or, *the net is spread in the sight &c.*

---

in exactly this form in Isa. lix. 7, where the Hebrew adds the word 'innocent.'

17. in vain. The sense of these words is not quite clear. If it is taken to mean that it is foolish to spread the net in the sight of the birds because they will not then go into the snare, then that seems to contradict the purpose of the passage, for the wicked men are spoken of as if successful in their quest. It must, therefore, mean that the birds are so foolish that, though the snare is set in their sight, they fall into it; so the wicked, though they know the risks they are running, take them, and are punished. The LXX introduces a negative, and renders 'for not in vain are nets spread for birds,' which may either represent a difference in the original text, or an endeavour to make good sense. This rendering will look forward to the statement in verse 18, meaning that the wicked fall into snares just as easily as birds do.

18. their own blood. The LXX also neglects the word 'own,' and has nothing to correspond with the second clause. The idea of the Hebrew is that evil-doing brings its own punishment (cf. verse 31).

19. It taketh away the life. This is a satirical conclusion to the purpose stated in verse 11. Those who have plotted against others are themselves destroyed. They have, as Wildeboer puts it, 'dug their own graves.'

20. Wisdom crieth aloud. With this verse begins a new section, which lasts to the end of the chapter. We meet for the first time with that personification of wisdom which is a prominent feature of the early sections of this book, as it is also of much of the other Wisdom literature of the Hebrews (see Introduction, p. 22), and cf. especially chap. viii of this book, and the notes there.

the broad places. By this phrase the writer denotes the

21 She crieth [a] in the chief place of concourse;
At the entering in of the gates,
In the city, she uttereth her words:
22 How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity?
And scorners delight them in scorning,
And fools hate knowledge?
23 Turn you at my reproof:
Behold, I will pour out my spirit unto you,
I will make known my words unto you.
24 Because I have called, and ye refused;

---

[a] Heb. *at the head of the noisy* streets.

---

open spaces of a city, particularly those by the city gates, which were the general places of assembly (cf. Jer. v. 1 and Nahum ii. 4).

21. the chief place of concourse. This, as the margin indicates, should rather be, 'at the head of the noisy places' (cf. Isa. xxii. 2, 'a tumultuous city'). The phrase brings before us the sound of many people in crowded thoroughfares. The LXX reads 'on the top of the walls,' which suggests that wisdom acts as a watchman.

Entering in of the gates (cf. 2 Sam. xv. 2; Ruth iv. 1).

22. simple ones. In this verse are included different classes whose folly may be said to be placed in increasing ratio. First are the lovers of ignorance, of whom we have already read in verse 4; secondly, the scorners, who frequently meet us in the later Psalms and in this book, though the term also occurs, but not in such a technical sense, in Hosea, Isaiah, and Job. The word rendered 'fool' is confined to the Wisdom literature and to certain Psalms, and is defined by Toy as meaning 'one who is insensible to moral truth and acts without regard to it.'

The LXX destroys the interrogative form of the verse, and makes a number of other alterations, which do not seem likely to represent a better original.

23. Turn you. It is obvious, from the appeal that wisdom now makes, that none of those mentioned in verse 22 are regarded as hopeless, and the form of address is very suggestive, as it reminds us of the language in which the greatest promises of the N. T. are couched. Cf. Acts ii. 17.

24. Because I have called. The transition from the tender appeal and loving promise of the former verse to the whirlwind

I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded;
But ye have set at nought all my counsel, 25
And would none of my reproof:
I also will laugh in *the day of* your calamity; 26
I will mock when your fear cometh;
When your fear cometh as [a] a storm, 27
And your calamity cometh on as a whirlwind;
When distress and anguish come upon you.
Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; 28
They shall seek me [b] diligently, but they shall not find me:
For that they hated knowledge, 29
And did not choose the fear of the LORD:
They would none of my counsel; 30
They despised all my reproof:
Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, 31
And be filled with their own devices.
For the backsliding of the simple shall slay them, 32

[a] Or, *desolation* [b] Or, *early*

---

of passion and denunciation that this verse introduces is very striking, and has given rise to the idea that we must suppose a long pause between the two verses, or that wisdom is addressing two classes of people. It has also been suggested that the words 'how long' in verse 22 indicate that wisdom has already been making many appeals, and that this is her last one—hence its terrible character; and that it closes in the 33rd verse on a note of promise and hope. There is no denying the fact, however, that the verses which follow are filled with the thought of denunciation and judgement. There are no half-lights in the picture, and the sinner is identified with his sin. To admit this is nothing more than to say that the more profound spiritual conception of the New Testament had not yet been reached.

28. diligently. This is undoubtedly the proper meaning of the word, and the rendering 'early' seems to rest upon a false derivation.

29. knowledge. Bickell would read 'knowledge of God' here, as in ii. 5, but there is no evidence for it in any text, and, though it improves the balance of the clauses, it is rather too rash an innovation to venture upon.

32. backsliding. This is scarcely an accurate translation.

And the [a] prosperity of fools shall destroy them.
33 But whoso hearkeneth unto me shall dwell securely,
And shall be quiet without fear of evil.

2 My son, if thou wilt receive my words,
And lay up my commandments with thee;
2 So that thou incline thine ear unto wisdom,
And apply thine heart to understanding;
3 Yea, if thou cry after discernment,
And lift up thy voice for understanding;
4 If thou seek her as silver,

[a] Or, *careless ease*

'Refusal' or 'indifference' would better express the meaning. It seems to refer to verse 23 and the neglect of the invitation.

prosperity would be better rendered 'negligence.'

ii. **1. my commandments.** It has been pointed out that in this verse we have a clear instance of the difference between the prophetic and the wisdom literature. In the former the prophet always regards himself as the voice of the Lord, whereas in the latter the writer speaks in his own name. The word rendered 'commandments' is that used elsewhere for the moral and ritual directions of the Lord, but is here evidently used to describe the body of teaching received in the philosophical schools. The whole underlying conception is that of the wise man with his scholars.

2. heart. This Toy defines as 'the whole inward perceptive nature.' It is much more nearly represented by our word 'mind' than by 'heart.' To us the latter is the organ used to signify emotion, whereas the Hebrews employ the bowels in that sense: as they did not use the brain at all in their psychological language, the heart took its place.

3. lift up thy voice for. Properly 'invoke.'

4. silver. It is doubtful whether silver here means the precious ore, or the money that is coined from it. On the former assumption Plumptre refers to the beautiful description of mining in Job xxviii, and points out how the last verse of that chapter concludes with the same words as are found in Prov. i. 7. Of 'hid treasure' we read in Job iii. 21; Jer. xli. 8; Isa. xlv. 3, as well as in our Lord's parables, Matt. xiii. 44 and xxv. 25. The idea of effort and search rather favours the mining metaphor for the first clause, and the parallelism of the second also supports that interpretation.

And search for her as for hid treasures;
Then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, 5
And find the knowledge of God.
For the Lord giveth wisdom; 6
Out of his mouth *cometh* knowledge and understanding:
He layeth up sound wisdom for the upright, 7
[a] *He is* a shield to them that walk in integrity;
[b] That he may guard the paths of judgement, 8
[c] And preserve the way of his saints.
Then shalt thou understand righteousness and judgement, 9

---

[a] Or, And *a shield for &c.* [b] Or, *That they may keep* [c] Or, *Yea, he preserveth*

---

5. knowledge of God. The name 'God' is only found in four other passages of this book, ii. 17, iii. 4, xxv. 2, xxx. 9, and this particular phrase is only found here and in Hosea.

6. Out of his mouth. The phrase, which is common with the prophets, is, as Strack points out, only found here in Proverbs. As God is the originator of wisdom, we can understand how He must also be the goal of every human search after it.

7. He layeth up. This seems also to refer to the figure of verse 4. The search cannot be fruitless, since the Lord Himself has hidden the treasure.

He is a shield. This comparison of the Lord to a shield is a very frequent one; see, for example, Ps. lxxxiv. 11; but it is possible to translate it as meaning that wisdom is itself the shield, which also gives excellent sense.

8. That he may guard. The Hebrew will also allow us to translate 'that they may keep.' The rendering of the text is probably the correct one.

saints. The better translation is 'pious,' and it is the first occurrence in the book of a word that became famous in the history of Israel, viz. the Chasidim (see 1 Macc. ii. 42). They became the Puritans of later Judaism, and were the precursors of the Pharisees. The name also occurs in many of the later Psalms, a particularly interesting reference being Ps. lxxix. 2, which probably belongs to the time of the Maccabees. Toy considers that in this verse it is a late editorial note; but it is possible that we may take it as an indication of the late date of the section, especially as there are other evidences of late Hebrew in this chapter.

9. Toy introduces verse 20 immediately after verse 9, on the

And equity, *yea,* every good path.
10 For wisdom shall enter into thine heart,
And knowledge shall be pleasant unto thy soul;
11 Discretion shall watch over thee,
Understanding shall keep thee:
12 To deliver thee from the way of [a] evil,
From the men that speak froward things;
13 Who forsake the paths of uprightness,
To walk in the ways of darkness;
14 Who rejoice to do evil,
And delight in the frowardness of [a] evil;
15 Who are crooked in their ways,
And perverse in their paths:
16 To deliver thee from the strange woman,

[a] Or, *the evil* man

---

grounds that it follows more naturally after it than in its present position, and also that, standing where it does, it interrupts the connexion of thought between verses 19 and 21; but there is no manuscript authority for the alteration.

12. To deliver. The original form is a construction found only in late Hebrew.

evil. This seems, on the grounds of the parallelism, rather to mean 'evil men' than evil in itself, and some of the Jewish commentators understand the reference to be to the Epicureans.

froward. This Old-English word, which occurs frequently in Proverbs, means 'perverse,' 'wayward,' 'naughty.' It is literally 'fromward,' the opposite to 'toward'; see article on the word in *HDB.*

13. ways of darkness. This rather common metaphor runs all through Jewish literature, and constitutes one of the common contrasts of the fourth gospel.

14. The form of this verse, though not its thought, is closely parallel to that of Job iii. 22, and some consider it an evidence that this author knew that book.

the frowardness of evil. A very slight change in the vocalization of the Hebrew would read 'one's neighbour,' instead of 'evil,' but the parallelism rather favours the ordinary translation.

15. are crooked. This may also be read as an active, 'make crooked.'

16. the strange woman. This is the first introduction of

Even from the stranger which [a]flattereth with her words;
Which forsaketh the [b]friend of her youth, 17
And forgetteth the covenant of her God:
For [c]her house inclineth unto death, 18

[a] Heb. *maketh smooth her words.* [b] Or, *guide*
[c] Or, *she sinketh down unto death*, which is *her house*

---

a figure that is very familiar in the Proverbs. Generally, where the vice is touched upon, the temptress is an adulteress, though in certain passages, for instance in chapter v, the professional prostitute seems to be indicated. The presence of such women is indicated at almost every period of Jewish history, for we find them in Genesis (see xxxviii. 15), where the costume of her class is referred to; Judges xi. 1; Joshua ii. 1, and frequent references in the prophets. Undoubtedly, however, the vice became more common in the luxurious surroundings of later centuries, and as the Jews came into touch with Greek civilization in centres like Alexandria (see Josephus, *Antiquities*, xii. 4. 6, where the woman spoken of is called 'a foreigner,' and the Jewish law is quoted that forbids intercourse with such). A vivid picture of the dangers of such communities in this respect is found in Ecclus. ix. 3-9, xxiii. 16-26, &c. It must be remembered also that prostitution was part of the religious ritual of many forms of Semitic religion. Another question that arises here is as to what is meant by the epithet 'strange.' Originally the women of this class may in the main have belonged to non-Israelitish people, and the Jewish writers were accustomed to use the phrase 'Aramaean women' as synonymous with prostitutes. Some of their interpreters understand the word here as signifying Epicureans; but of course that allegorical interpretation is impossible.

flattereth. Better, perhaps, 'useth cajoling speech,' for an example of which see vii. 13-21.

17. friend. Undoubtedly this refers to the woman's husband. The verse finds a close parallel in Ecclus. xxiii. 23.

covenant. This denotes the marriage covenant, which probably had a religious character, though the details of it are unknown to us. See Tob. vii. 12-16.

18. her house. This signifies not only the building but all within it, and the figure seems to be that from the house an easy incline leads to the grave (cf. the Latin proverb *facilis descensus Averni*). The LXX translates, not so probably, 'she has set her house by death.' Death is, of course, Sheol, not in itself a place of punishment, but indicating that such courses lead to a speedy end of life—a sound teaching which is common in the O.T.

And her paths unto [a] the dead:
19 None that go unto her return again,
Neither do they attain unto the paths of life:
20 That thou mayest walk in the way of good men,
And keep the paths of the righteous.
21 For the upright shall dwell in the [b] land,
And the perfect shall remain in it.
22 But the wicked shall be cut off from the [b] land,
And they that deal treacherously shall be rooted out of it.

3 My son, forget not my [c] law;
But let thine heart keep my commandments:
2 For length of days, and years of life,
And peace, shall they add to thee.
3 Let not [d] mercy and truth forsake thee:

[a] Or, *the shades* Heb. *Rephaim.* [b] Or, *earth* [c] Or, *teaching*
[d] Or, *kindness*

---

the dead. This is here the proper name *Rephaim*, who were originally, according to the legend in Genesis, a gigantic race who dwelt in Canaan (cf. Gen. xiv. 5; Deut. ii. 11). In Job xxvi. 5 and Isa. xiv. 9, as here, the name is applied to the shades or inhabitants of the underworld, whether, as some suppose, because the giant races were imagined as the first inhabitants of that realm, or from some element of the popular mythology, that we cannot now trace. Others have derived the title from a root meaning 'weak' or 'feeble,' but this does not seem probable.

20. Here, again, are evidences of late Hebrew. See note on verse 9 above for suggestion as to the probably correct position of this verse.

21. land. This must necessarily mean the land of Israel, as it was a central idea of the Hebrew religion that it was a sign of the Divine favour to abide in one's native country (see Ps. xxxvii. 3, 11, 29, and Matt. v. 5). The idea of reward in this verse, and of punishment in the verse that follows, is still along the line of the older Hebrew faith, which regarded the signs of the Divine favour to be declared by present gain and prosperity. As Toy points out, it was a later day that introduced the idea of future compensation for present distress, as in the Book of Wisdom, chap. iii.

iii. **3. mercy.** This should rather be 'kindness,' as the idea is

Bind them about thy neck;
Write them upon the table of thine heart:
So shalt thou find favour and [a] good understanding 4
In the sight of God and man.
Trust in the LORD with all thine heart, 5
And lean not upon thine own understanding:
In all thy ways acknowledge him, 6
And he shall [b] direct thy paths.
Be not wise in thine own eyes; 7
Fear the LORD, and depart from evil:
It shall be health to thy navel, 8

[a] Or, *good repute* [b] Or, *make straight* or *plain*

---

not so much that of compassion as of friendliness, and so the word 'truth,' which immediately follows, should rather be rendered 'faithfulness.'

Bind. It is a question whether the figure is taken from the wearing of amulets, of a necklace (see i. 9), or of a seal ring upon a chain (see Gen. xxxviii. 18). The first meaning would signify the truth that obedience to the commandment would ward off evil, the second that it would adorn character, and the third that they should always be ready to hand in a moment of need. The last interpretation is the most probable.

Write. Cf. Jer. xxxi. 33. The figure is probably taken from the practice described in Deut. vi. 8, which was the origin of the wearing of phylacteries; and the wise man here states that it is more important to have the law within the heart than wear its precepts upon the person. For the idea thus conveyed see 2 Cor. iii. 3.

4. understanding. By a very slight change in the Hebrew, the meaning 'good repute' is obtained, which is certainly more intelligible.

5. understanding. This is a different word in the original from that translated in the same way in the former verse, but in this case the meaning is correct, and points to the importance of subjecting human judgement to Divine guidance.

8. health. This may be taken quite literally, seeing that obedience to the Divine laws does secure physical wellbeing.

navel. The change of a single letter gives the Hebrew word for 'body,' which is most probably the correct reading. (See Song of Songs vii. 2 and note.)

And [a] marrow to thy bones.
9 Honour the LORD with thy substance,
And with the firstfruits of all thine increase:
10 So shall thy barns be filled with plenty,
And thy fats shall overflow with new wine.

11 My son, despise not the [b] chastening of the LORD;
Neither be weary of his reproof:
12 For whom the LORD loveth he reproveth;
Even as a father the son in whom he delighteth.

[a] Or, *refreshing* Heb. *moistening.* [b] Or, *instruction*

---

marrow. This should rather be rendered 'refreshment.' As Wildeboer says, the modern equivalent would be 'a tonic to thy nerves.'

9. firstfruits. We have here an undoubted reference to the definite precepts of the law (see Deut. xviii. 4, xxvi. 2), and it is, of course, very interesting to find the philosophers thus adapting the legal ordinances to their own teaching.

10. barns. Here also the promise made in Deut. xxviii. 8 is evidently in the thought of the writer, as well, perhaps, as Mal. iii. 10–12.

11. This and the following verse seem to constitute a short section dealing with the subject of the sufferings of the righteous, a topic that is frequently discussed in the wisdom literature. The foundation passage seems to be Job v. 17, 18, on which this passage is probably based. It is developed still further in the second chapter of Ecclus. verses 1–6. In the Ps. of Sol. xiii. 8, 9 we find an interesting reference to the same teaching, and there we read, 'For he will admonish the righteous as a beloved son: and his chastening is as a man chasteneth his firstborn. For the Lord will spare his saints, and will blot out their transgressions with His chastening: for the life of the righteous is for ever'; and the Greek form of the present passage is found in Heb. xii. 5, 6, while a reference to the same thought is discoverable in Jas. i. 12.

despise . . . be weary may also be rendered 'reject . . . spurn.' The Greek for the latter word reads 'faint not,' either paraphrasing the original, or translating a different Hebrew word.

12. Even as a father. The Hebrew will allow us to translate 'and afflicts,' which the LXX translation supports (see Heb. xii. 6).

ST. BASIL'S SEMINARY
LIBRARY

Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, 13
And the man that [a] getteth understanding.
For the merchandise of it is better than the merchandise 14
of silver,
And the gain thereof than fine gold.
She is more precious than [b] rubies: 15
And none of the things thou canst desire are to be compared unto her.
Length of days is in her right hand; 16
In her left hand are riches and honour.
Her ways are ways of pleasantness, 17
And all her paths are peace.
She is a tree of life to them that lay hold upon her: 18
And happy is every one that retaineth her.
The LORD by wisdom founded the earth; 19

[a] Heb. *draweth forth.* [b] See Job xxviii. 18.

---

14. merchandise. The translations of this verse vary a good deal in the different versions, but the variation seems to arise mainly from a different understanding of the metaphor, namely, as to whether what is signified is the wealth that wisdom wins or the wealth derived from the proper use of wisdom. It is probable that this verse may lie at the basis of the parable in Matt. xiii. 45, 46.

15. rubies. The proper translation of the original word is very uncertain, but it seems on the whole most probable that coral is here meant (cf. Job xxviii. 18, and the articles 'coral' and 'ruby' in the Bible dictionaries). We know that coral was highly esteemed in the ancient world.

16. After this verse the LXX adds one which has no equivalent in Hebrew, namely, 'out of her mouth proceeds righteousness, and law and mercy she bears on her tongue' (cf. Isa. xlv. 23 and Prov. xxxi. 26). The verse may be the work of some Greek editor.

18. a tree of life. This figure is undoubtedly derived from Gen. ii. 9, and the figure occurs again in xi. 30, xiii. 12, xv. 4, which, perhaps, is a proof that the early legends of Genesis were much studied and interpreted by the wisdom writers. Elsewhere in the Bible there is no reference to the 'tree of life,' save in Ezek. xlvii. 12, and in Rev. ii. 7, xxii. 2.

By understanding he established the heavens.
20 By his knowledge the depths were broken up,
And the skies drop down the dew.

21 My son, let not them depart from thine eyes;
Keep sound wisdom and discretion;
22 So shall they be life unto thy soul,
And grace to thy neck.
23 Then shalt thou walk in thy way securely,
And [a] thy foot shall not stumble.
24 When thou liest down, thou shalt not be afraid:
Yea, thou shalt lie down, and thy sleep shall be sweet.
25 Be not afraid of sudden fear,
Neither of the [b] desolation of the wicked, when it cometh:
26 For the LORD shall be thy confidence,
And shall keep thy foot from being taken.
27 Withhold not good from them to whom it is due,

[a] Heb. *thou shalt not dash thy foot.* [b] Or, *storm*

19, 20. For a discussion of the ideas contained in these verses see notes on viii. 23-31.

21. let not them depart. Toy suggests with great probability that the two clauses of this verse should be inverted, as it certainly seems more probable that the virtues to be retained should be named before the counsel is given to cling to them. A curious translation of the LXX is 'Do not escape,' and as the same word is employed in Heb. ii. 1, there translated 'drift away,' it is just possible that there may be a reference there to this passage.

22. grace to thy neck (cf. i. 9).

23. shall not stumble. This should probably be in the active form: 'Thou shalt not dash thy foot' (cf. Ps. xci. 12).

24. When thou liest down. This may possibly be, as the LXX translates, 'When thou sittest down' (cf. Ps. iv. 8, and Deut. vi. 7).

25. Cf. Ps. xci. 5, 6.

26. from being taken. The LXX translates 'from being moved'; cf. Ps. cxxi. 3.

27. The difference in style of the next few verses (27-35)

When it is in the power of thine hand to do it.
Say not unto thy neighbour, Go, and come again, 28
And to-morrow I will give;
When thou hast it by thee.
Devise not evil against thy neighbour, 29
Seeing he dwelleth securely by thee.
Strive not with a man without cause, 30
If he have done thee no harm.
Envy thou not the man of violence, 31
And choose none of his ways.
For the perverse is an abomination to the LORD: 32
But his [a] secret is with the upright.
The curse of the LORD is in the house of the wicked; 33
But he blesseth the habitation of the righteous.
[b] Surely he scorneth the scorners, 34
[c] But he giveth grace unto the lowly.
The wise shall inherit glory; 35
But [d] shame shall be the promotion of fools.

[a] Or, *counsel* Or, *friendship* [b] Or, *Though*
[c] Or, *Yet* [d] Or, *fools carry away shame*

---

is noteworthy, and probably signifies not only a new paragraph but the work of another hand, or at any rate the insertion here of a passage which belongs to another part of the book.

them to whom it is due. There is a difficulty about the translation of this verse, as the Hebrew signifies literally 'possessors.' By a slight change in the word it can be translated 'neighbour.' The LXX translates 'the poor,' which is not admissible as a paraphrase of the Hebrew, and may represent a different original. Cf. Luke xi. 5, in illustration.

29. Security lies in the preservation of neighbourly trustworthiness of conduct.

32. secret is better rendered 'friendship,' the word meaning private or intimate friendship.

34. This verse in its Greek form is found in Jas. iv. 6; 1 Pet. v. 5. Cf. also Ps. xviii. 26, 27.

35. promotion. The original word is very difficult to render

4 Hear, *my* sons, the instruction of a father,
And attend to know understanding:
2 For I give you good doctrine;
Forsake ye not my [a] law.
3 For I was a son unto my father,
Tender and [b] only beloved in the sight of my mother.
4 And he taught me, and said unto me,
Let thine heart retain my words;
Keep my commandments, and live:
5 Get wisdom, get understanding;
Forget *it* not, neither decline from the words of my mouth:
6 Forsake her not, and she shall preserve thee;
Love her, and she shall keep thee.
7 [c] Wisdom *is* the principal thing; *therefore* get wisdom:

[a] Or, *teaching* [b] Heb. *an only one.*
[c] Or, *The beginning of wisdom* is, *Get wisdom*

---

satisfactorily, and so all the versions have felt. Neither the rendering of the R. V. text nor that of the margin is satisfactory. Some alteration of the original seems requisite, and the simplest is that which gives the translation 'portion,' which both gives a good sense and preserves the parallelism of the verse. Bunyan quotes this verse in describing Faithful's interview with that 'bold villain, Shame.'

iv. 1-9. Here is a tender personal passage, throwing a light on the early days of the teacher. It gives us a beautiful picture of the pious household of the period, and we should be glad to be quite certain of its date. The passage has almost certainly had great influence upon later generations, and formed a model for many homes in Puritan England and the Scotland of the covenant (cf. Burns, 'Cotter's Saturday Night'). The older commentators tried to find reference to Solomon in the passage, particularly in verse 3, but this is, of course, purely imaginary and improbable.

5. Forget it not. This clause is considered by Toy to be an addition to the original, as it simply repeats what has already been said, and adds no new point to it.

7. Wisdom is the principal thing. This translation is a paraphrase rather than a representation of the original, which has the

Yea, with all thou hast gotten get understanding.
Exalt her, and she shall promote thee : 8
She shall bring thee to honour, when thou dost embrace her.
She shall give to thine head a chaplet of grace : 9
A crown of [a] beauty shall she deliver to thee.

Hear, O my son, and receive my sayings ; 10
And the years of thy life shall be many.
I have taught thee in the way of wisdom ; 11
I have led thee in paths of uprightness.
When thou goest, thy steps shall not be straitened ; 12
And if thou runnest, thou shalt not stumble.
Take fast hold of instruction ; let her not go : 13
Keep her ; for she is thy life.
Enter not into the path of the wicked, 14
And walk not in the way of evil men.
Avoid it, pass not by it ; 15
Turn from it, and pass on.
For they sleep not, except they have done mischief ; 16
And their sleep is taken away, unless they cause some to fall.

[a] Or, *glory*

---

common phrase 'the beginning of wisdom,' but it is difficult to bring this into connexion with the rest of the phrase. It is possible that the verse arose, as Toy suggests, from the expansion of the marginal notes 'get wisdom and get understanding.' The verse is not found in the LXX at all, so that there is much ground for its omission.

8. Exalt. The sense of the word here is rather 'prize.'

9. crown of beauty. Cf. Ecclus. vi. 29-31 ; also i. 9 above, and the note there.

12. Cf. Job xviii. 7 and the note on that verse in the Cambridge Bible.

16. By a very strong figure of speech the writer reverses the common idea of the peaceful sleep of innocence for that of the sleep of evil-doers, who are supposed to be so eager in the

17 For they eat the bread of wickedness,
And drink the wine of violence.
18 But the path of the righteous is as [a] the shining light,
That shineth more and more unto the perfect day.
19 The way of the wicked is as darkness:
They know not at what they stumble.

20 My son, attend to my words;
Incline thine ear unto my sayings.
21 Let them not depart from thine eyes;
Keep them in the midst of thine heart.
22 For they are life unto those that find them,
And health to all their flesh.
23 Keep thy heart [b] with all diligence;

[a] Or, *the light of dawn*
[b] Or, *above all that thou guardest*

---

pursuit of wickedness that they actually are unable to sleep unless they have done some evil deed.

17. the bread of wickedness. This may either mean that wickedness constitutes the food and drink of such men or that they acquire their wealth by evil practices. The former is more probable.

18. Toy inverts the order of the verses 18 and 19, as the latter is most closely connected with verse 17, and, we might also add, that the better close thus given to the section favours the inversion.

the shining light. The word thus rendered seems to mean simply brightness, and there is no sufficient justification for the rendering 'dawn,' given in the margin.

the perfect day. The exact meaning of this expression is also uncertain, but, on the whole, the probability is in favour of its meaning 'noontide.'

21. Let them not depart. The LXX has an interesting translation here, 'In order that thy fountains fail not, guard them in the heart,' the reference being to the necessity of preserving springs with the utmost diligence (cf. Song of Songs iv. 12). There can be no doubt, however, that the meaning of the existing Hebrew is correctly represented by our version.

22. all their flesh. This signifies 'their whole being' (cf. iii. 8, and note).

with all diligence, that is, 'with all possible vigilance.'

For out of it are the issues of life.
Put away from thee a froward mouth, 24
And perverse lips put far from thee.
Let thine eyes look right on, 25
And let thine eyelids look straight before thee.
[a] Make level the path of thy feet, 26
And let all thy ways be [b] established.
Turn not to the right hand nor to the left: 27
Remove thy foot from evil.

My son, attend unto my wisdom; 5
Incline thine ear to my understanding:
That thou mayest preserve discretion, 2

[a] Or, *Weigh carefully* [b] Or, *ordered aright*

---

issues seems to mean here 'origins.' The heart, as we have seen, was used as equivalent to our word 'brain'; therefore the meaning is that spiritual life finds its source in a true grasp of, and obedience to, Divine precepts.

25. eyelids is here put metaphorically for 'gaze.' When a man's gaze is fixed intently upon a goal his eyelids are naturally immovable.

After verse 27 the LXX inserts two verses, 'For the ways of the right hand God knoweth, but crooked are those of the left, and He will make straight thy paths, and guide thy goings in peace.' It is impossible to decide whether these words ever had any Hebrew original, or, as some have supposed, are the work of a Christian scribe who had in mind the idea of the 'two ways' which was so familiar a conception in early Christian literature (cf. 'The Teaching of the Twelve,' c. 1).

v. **1. my wisdom.** It is noteworthy that never elsewhere is the personal possessive pronoun used with 'wisdom' and 'understanding,' and this fact, coupled with the two further considerations that the meaning of verse 2 is not clear, and that there is no link of connexion with verse 3, leads to the conclusion that there is some original corruption of the Hebrew text. Perhaps a line has been omitted at the end of verse 2 to the effect 'that they may keep thee from the strange woman'; but it is not now possible to reconstruct the passage, and the versions do not help us.

And that thy lips may keep knowledge.
3 For the lips of a strange woman drop honey,
And her mouth is smoother than oil:
4 But her latter end is bitter as wormwood,
Sharp as a two-edged sword.
5 Her feet go down to death;
Her steps take hold on [a] Sheol;
6 [b] So that she findeth not the level path of life:
Her ways are unstable *and* [c] she knoweth *it* not.
7 Now therefore, *my* sons, hearken unto me,
And depart not from the words of my mouth.
8 Remove thy way far from her,
And come not nigh the door of her house:

[a] Or, *the grave*

[b] Or, *Lest thou find the level, &c.* Or, *Lest thou weigh carefully the path of life*

[c] Or, *thou canst not know* them

---

3. mouth. This is literally 'palate,' and is undoubtedly used figuratively for speech, as in chap. vii the woman is pictured as a mistress of cajoling words.

4. her latter end—that is, the final outcome of association with her, the word always implying 'final judgement.'

wormwood. The plant thus designated it is impossible to identify with certainty, though several species of it are said to be found in Palestine. To the Hebrews the idea of bitterness and poison were largely synonymous, and there is no doubt that here the double elements of unpleasantness and fatal results are combined (cf. Lev. viii. 10, 11).

5. Cf. ii. 18. This verse is quoted by Bunyan in his account of Madam Wanton's assault on Faithful.

6. The Hebrew is not quite clear, but our version represents the meaning with sufficient accuracy. The verse is obviously a contrast to iv. 26.

This chapter is also quoted (with Ecclus. xxvi) in Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy*, iii. 2. 5. 3, where the whole passage is very striking.

7. sons. So the Hebrew reads, but almost certainly in error, as the address continues in the singular, and the versions all so read it.

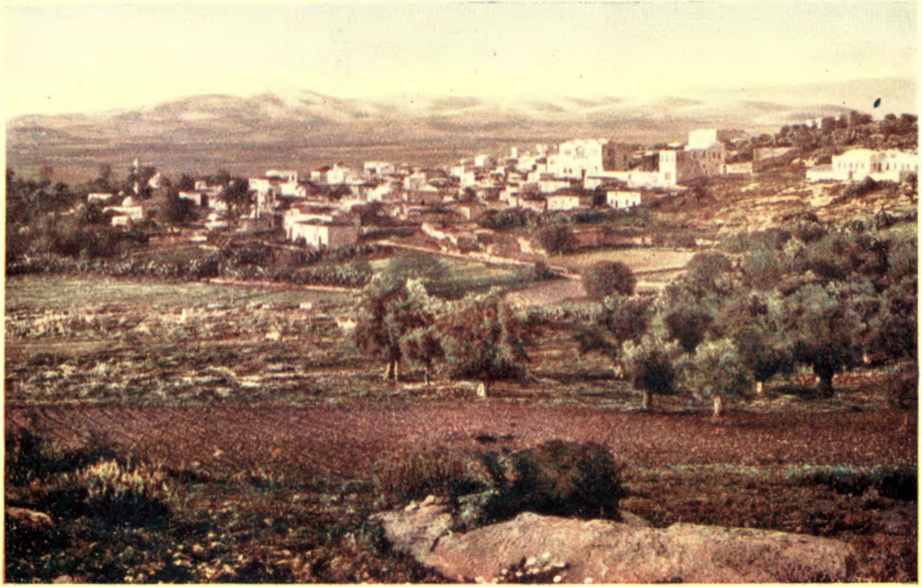


Photo. Photochrom Co.

EN GANNIM (Jenîn)

Lest thou give thine honour unto others, 9
And thy years unto the cruel:
Lest strangers be filled with thy [a] strength; 10
And thy labours *be* in the house of an alien;
And thou [b] mourn at thy latter end, 11
When thy flesh and thy body are consumed
And say, How have I hated instruction, 12
And my heart despised reproof;
Neither have I obeyed the voice of my teachers, 13
Nor inclined mine ear to them that instructed me!
I was well nigh in all evil 14
In the midst of the congregation and assembly.
Drink waters out of thine own cistern, 15

[a] Or, *wealth* [b] Or, *groan*

9-11. These verses state the results of such evil courses, and we need not seek closely to identify each point. Suffice it to say that those who are to reap the reward are the temptress and her associates, and that in the first instance the folly of such courses of life is insisted upon. A man loses his wealth, his social position, and everything that is worth having in life (cf. Hogarth's wonderful series of pictures, 'The Rake's Progress').

11. thy flesh and thy body. This combination may signify the whole personality, and may not be confined, as many suppose, to the physical results of such conduct.

13. 'Here, as elsewhere in the book, it seems to be assumed that more or less organized schemes of moral instruction for young men existed—incipient universities, such as appear in the second century B. C.'—Toy.

14. I was well nigh. The thought of the verse is apparently the sudden realization of the man that he was standing upon the brink of a precipice, and that he had just escaped censure and punishment at the hands of his own people. It is apparent that the words are meant to be a technical description of a judicial court (cf. Ecclus. xxiii. 21).

15. Drink waters. Here the figure employed is one which was common to Oriental poetry, where the cistern or fountain signified a woman or wife (cf. Song of Songs iv. 15; Eccles. xii. 1, note; Isa. li. 1). The general idea of the verse is that sufficient pleasure should be found in the hallowed intercourse of marriage.

And running waters out of thine own well.
16 [a] Should thy springs be dispersed abroad,
And rivers of water in the streets?
17 Let them be for thyself alone,
And not for strangers with thee.
18 Let thy fountain be blessed;
And rejoice in the wife of thy youth.
19 *As* a loving hind and a pleasant doe,
Let her breasts satisfy thee at all times;
And [b] be thou ravished always with her love.
20 For why shouldest thou, my son, [b] be ravished with a strange woman,
And embrace the bosom of a stranger?
21 For the ways of man are before the eyes of the LORD,
And he [c] maketh level all his paths.
22 His own iniquities shall take the wicked,
And he shall be holden with the cords of his sin.

[a] Or, *Let* [b] Heb. *Go astray.* [c] Or, *weigheth carefully*

---

16. Should thy springs. Here the figure is continued under the idea of contrast; the fountain that is a man's own possession should be kept to himself, and he should have no reason to long for others.

18. blessed. A very slight alteration of the original permits the translation of the LXX, 'thine only,' which gives a better sense.

the wife of thy youth. Early marriage was a practice among the Jews, and was probably in itself advocated by the sages as a safeguard against immorality.

19. loving hind. Such comparisons are frequent in Oriental poetry (see Dalman *passim*), though it is noteworthy that this is the only place in the O. T. where a woman is compared for beauty to any animal.

doe is perhaps the female wild goat, though 'gazelle' is also possible.

21. maketh level. Here probably 'weighs,' that is, 'reckons up the value of.'

22. Bunyan pictures the man who was cast in at the door on the side of the hill 'as being bound with these cords.'

He shall die for lack of instruction ; 23
And in the greatness of his folly he shall go astray.

My son, if thou art become surety for thy neighbour, 6
If thou hast stricken [a] thy hands for a stranger,

---

[a] Or, *thy hand with a stranger*

Chap. vi. In the first nineteen verses of this chapter are given three special illustrations of folly. In the matter of suretyship, of the life of the sluggard, and of the manners of the worthless person. Thereafter the writer returns, verse 24 ff., to the subject of sexual immorality, and leads up to the dramatic description of that particular form of vice which fills the seventh chapter.

1. surety. The practice of being surety for a friend, and the folly entailed by that risk, is a frequent subject of warning in this book, and the passage that deals with it most fully is this one (cf. also xi. 15, xvii. 18, xx. 16, xxii. 26, 27, xxvii. 13). The practice seems to have grown up in post-exilic Judaism, as all references to it are found in the later literature. It may have been learned from contact with the civilizations of Persia and Greece. The Book of Proverbs reflects the horror that was felt at the practice, when it was comparatively a novelty, because the later Book of Ecclus. deals with it in a more worldly-wise manner (cf. Ecclus. viii. 13, 'Be not surety above thy power ; and if thou be surety, take thought as one that will have to pay') and in xxix. 14–20 the practice is praised as a sign of neighbourliness, though verse 18 is not silent about its risks and penalties. Experience teaches us the general wisdom of the counsel here given, as men are frequently tempted in a moment of thoughtless generosity to put their hand to bonds whose claims they are not able to meet when called upon to do so. The word here translated 'surety,' viz. *arrhabon*, was probably of Phoenician origin, and entered not only into Hebrew but into Greek, and is familiar in Paul's epistle under the translation 'earnest' (cf. Eph. i. 14). It passed thence into Latin, where in a shortened form it became the regular term for the portion of the price paid beforehand as the seal of a contract, and is now found in dialectic English and in Scotch, in the forms of 'earls-penny' and 'arles,' as the small proportion of wages given to a servant on engagement. As an interesting literary study of the risks of suretyship, see Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice.*

striken thy hands. As an instance of this practice see 2 Kings x. 15.

stranger. This fails to give the proper meaning of the original, which should really be 'another,' and is more nearly

2 Thou art snared with the words of thy mouth,
Thou art taken with the words of thy mouth.
3 Do this now, my son, and deliver thyself,
Seeing thou art come into the hand of thy neighbour;
Go, [a] humble thyself, and importune thy neighbour.
4 Give not sleep to thine eyes,
Nor slumber to thine eyelids.
5 Deliver thyself as a [b] roe from the hand *of the hunter*,
And as a bird from the hand of the fowler.

6 Go to the ant, thou sluggard;
Consider her ways, and be wise:
7 Which having no [c] chief,
Overseer, or ruler,

[a] Or, *bestir* [b] Or, *gazelle* [c] Or, *judge*

---

synonymous with 'neighbour' than contrasted with it, as the English suggests.

3. humble thyself. This should rather be 'bestir thyself.' There is need for urgency, as in the similar counsel given by our Lord in Matt. v. 25.

importune. This, again, is hardly strong enough. 'Besiege' more nearly represents the real meaning.

5. For the figure, cf. Ps. cxxiv. 7.

6. There is a close parallel to this section in xxiv. 30-34, though there no mention of the ant is made. Both passages conclude with the words found in verses 10 and 11, which may probably have been a well-known proverb.

ant. These insects were much referred to by the sages of the ancient world as examples of foresight and industry. Greek writers like Plutarch and Aristotle mention them, as well as Indian, Syrian, Persian, and Chinese authors (cf. Malan's *Proverbs*, vol. i, pp. 290-300). The LXX adds a parallel passage here on the bee, and several of the Christian fathers (e.g. Clement of Alexandria, *Strom.* i. 6) quote it in this form. As readers of Bunyan will remember, it is with this verse that Christian was awakened as he lay asleep in the arbour.

7. chief. Aristotle (*De Anim.* i. 1, 11) says they had no government; but later authorities speak of their leaders, and modern scientific investigation credits them with an elaborate social organization.

Provideth her meat in the summer, 8
And gathereth her food in the harvest.
How long wilt thou [a] sleep, O sluggard? 9
When wilt thou arise out of thy sleep?
Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, 10
A little folding of the hands to [a] sleep:
So shall thy poverty come as a [b] robber, 11
And thy want as [c] an armed man.

A worthless person, a man of iniquity; 12
He walketh with a froward mouth;

---

[a] Heb. *lie down.* [b] Or, *rover*
[c] Heb. *a man with a shield.*

---

8. summer. This is not to be taken as referring to one season, while the harvest of the next clause refers to another, but they are simply double statements of the same fact, and refer to the same season. The addition has more that is akin to Greek thought than to Hebrew, and runs, in part, thus: 'Go to the bee and learn how diligent she is and how seriously she does her work . . . though feeble in body, by honouring wisdom, she obtains distinction.'

10. folding of the hands. Cf. Eccles. iv. 5. The idea is the elaborate and determined preparation for a siesta.

11. as a robber. This presents to us the stealthy and unexpected approach or ambush of the trained highwayman. Instead of 'armed man' the LXX has 'swift runner,' and it, as well as the Vulgate, has a curious addition, which may probably have been an attempt to provide a pleasing ending to the paragraph: 'But if thou be diligent, thy harvest will come as a fountain, and want will depart as a bad runner.'

12. A worthless person. Literally, 'a man of Belial.' This strange and difficult phrase occurs in two other passages in this book, namely, xvi. 27, and xix. 28. It is generally taken as equivalent to 'worthlessness,' but the derivation is uncertain: and another probable one is that the word Belial does not mean 'no profit,' as this suggests, but rather 'no rising up.' Apart, however, from its derivative meaning, there is the curious use of the word as a proper name, and some suppose it to have been the designation of a deity of the underworld (see Ps. xviii. 4 R.V. mg.), and that hence the title was applied at a later time to the Antichrist (see 2 Cor. vi. 15, and the *Ascension of Is.* iii. 23 to iv. 13). In any case the phrase must signify men of vile conduct.

13 He winketh with his eyes, he [a] speaketh with his feet,
He [b] maketh signs with his fingers;
14 Frowardness is in his heart, he deviseth evil continually;
He [c] soweth discord.
15 Therefore shall his calamity come suddenly;
On a sudden shall he be broken, and that without remedy.
16 There be six things which the LORD hateth;
Yea, seven which are an abomination [d] unto him:
17 Haughty eyes, a lying tongue,
And hands that shed innocent blood;
18 An heart that deviseth wicked imaginations,
Feet that be swift in running to mischief;
19 A false witness that [e] uttereth lies,
And he that [c] soweth discord among brethren.

20 My son, keep the commandment of thy father,
And forsake not the [f] law of thy mother:
21 Bind them continually upon thine heart,

[a] Or, *shuffleth* [b] Or, *teacheth* [c] Heb. *letteth loose.*
[d] Heb. *of his soul.* [e] Heb. *breatheth out.* [f] Or, *teaching*

---

13. He winketh with his eyes. Cf. Ecclus. xxvii. 22, and also an Arabic saying quoted by Delitzsch: 'O God, pardon us the culpable winking of the eye'; and Malan quotes from the institutes of *Manu* (an Indian work) a very appropriate parallel: 'Beware of having nimble hands and movable feet, a winking eye, of being crooked in thy ways, of having a voluble tongue, and of being clever at doing mischief to others.'

speaketh. Rather 'scrapes,' or 'shuffles,' the idea apparently being to make a sign to his confederates. The LXX interprets by 'makes signs.'

16. There be six. The form of the comparison here is that which occurs again in chap. xxx, and is a merely rhetorical way of stating something indefinite, that is, the list is not supposed to be exhausted. It is probably not original to the passage here, but has been inserted by a later hand as appropriate to what precedes. These numerical enumerations appear to have been a popular form of statement for truths that it was desired to memorize.

20, 21. Cf. i. 8 and iii. 3.

Tie them about thy neck.
When thou walkest, it shall lead thee; 22
When thou [a] sleepest, it shall watch over thee;
And when thou awakest, it shall talk with thee.
For [b] the commandment is a lamp; and [c] the law is light; 23
And reproofs of instruction are the way of life:
To keep thee from the evil woman, 24
From the flattery of the stranger's tongue.
Lust not after her beauty in thine heart; 25
Neither let her take thee with her eyelids.
For on account of a whorish woman *a man is brought* to 26
a piece of bread:

[a] Heb. *liest down.*
[b] Or, their *commandment*
[c] Or, their *teaching*

---

22. It will be noticed that this verse falls into three clauses, which shows that it is irregular in construction, and either the last clause should be omitted or we have to assume that a clause has been lost. Toy places verse 23 before verse 22, and understands wisdom as the subject in the latter, presuming that perhaps some clause that introduced wisdom has been dropped.

23. the law. The reading of the Vulgate is memorable in its striking apposition of the two words, *lex*, *lux*.

24. evil woman. The slightest alteration of the Hebrew would give the meaning 'wife of another,' and the LXX has 'married woman.' As the sin of adultery is that most generally dealt with in these sections, this is probably correct.

25. Lust. Cf. Matt. v. 28, where it is possible our Lord had this verse in mind.

26. on account of. This is not the correct meaning of the Hebrew preposition, and, as will be noticed, several words have to be introduced in order to make sense. The real meaning is 'in exchange for,' which would mean that a harlot's hire is a loaf of bread, while one pays for an adulteress with his life. A slight change of the Hebrew verb would give the same word in each verse, thus: 'A harlot hunts for a piece of bread, but the adulteress hunts for the precious life.' It is in agreement with the general view of Hebrew ethics that adultery was reckoned a greater sin than irregular sexual intercourse. There remains a further question, however, with regard to this verse, as to whether both clauses do not refer to the same woman, in which case it would only be a rhetorical intensification of the warning.

And [a] the adulteress hunteth for the precious life.
27 Can a man take fire in his bosom,
And his clothes not be burned?
28 Or can one walk upon hot coals,
And his feet not be scorched?
29 So he that goeth in to his neighbour's wife;
Whosoever toucheth her shall not be [b] unpunished.
30 Men do not despise a thief, if he steal
To satisfy his soul when he is hungry:
31 But if he be found, he shall restore sevenfold;
He shall give all the substance of his house.
32 He that committeth adultery with a woman is void of [c] understanding:
He doeth it that would destroy his own soul.
33 Wounds and dishonour shall he get;
And his reproach shall not be wiped away.
34 For jealousy is the rage of a man;

[a] Heb. *a man's wife.* [b] Heb. *held innocent.* [c] Heb. *heart.*

---

30. Men do not despise. This translation makes the meaning difficult to understand. The ordinary explanation is that a thief is not despised if he has hunger as the excuse for his theft: but is that true? And certainly there cannot be adduced any evidence that the Hebrews ever took so lenient a view of the matter. It seems better, therefore, to translate as a query, 'Do not men despise?'

31. sevenfold. According to Exod. xxii. 1, fivefold was the highest legal limit of restitution. It may be, however, that later laws required a larger payment, but it is more likely that the sevenfold here is merely a round number meaning ample (cf. Ps. lxxix. 12; Matt. xviii. 22).

32. destroy his own soul is simply 'destroys himself.' As compared with the thief, he is a greater fool.

34. jealousy. This, of course, refers to the jealousy of the husband who has been deceived. The whole force of the restraint of an adulterer seems to us to be put on very low ground (cf. Ecclus. xxiii. 21), as nothing more than self-interest is appealed to, and especially is there no recognition of the woman's moral degradation. She is regarded throughout as only the evil temptress for whom not a good word is spoken. This attitude was, of course,

And he will not spare in the day of vengeance.
He will not regard any ransom; 35
Neither will he rest content, though thou givest many gifts.

My son, keep my words, 7
And lay up my commandments with thee.
Keep my commandments and live; 2
And my [a] law as the apple of thine eye.
Bind them upon thy fingers; 3
Write them upon the table of thine heart.
Say unto wisdom, Thou art my sister; 4
And call understanding *thy* [b] kinswoman:
That they may keep thee from the strange woman, 5
From the stranger which [c] flattereth with her words.

[a] Or, *teaching* [b] Or, *familiar friend*
[c] Heb. *maketh smooth her words.*

---

common to much ancient literature, and we shall come across further traces of it in this book. Amongst the Greek authors it was Euripides who said the harshest things about women.

vii. **1.** Between this and verse 2 the LXX introduces the words 'My son, fear the Lord, and thou shalt be strong, and beside Him fear no other,' which is probably the addition of some scribe or editor who wished to introduce an element of more distinctly religious counsel. Toy quotes appropriately from Racine, *Athalie*, i. 1, 'I fear God, dear Abner, and have no other fear.'

2. the apple, that is the 'pupil' (cf. Ps. xvii. 8), which was regarded as a symbol of the most precious and valuable things.

Bind. It is a question whether this refers to the phylacteries, the date of whose introduction is uncertain, but may be anywhere between 250 and 100 B. C. (see article, 'Phylacteries,' *HDB.*). It is just possible, therefore, that this may be the earliest literary reference to the practice. On the other hand, the words may refer to a signet-ring, though the word 'bind' would not then be so appropriate.

4. Thou art my sister. Here wisdom is personified, and we may assume that the sage suggests that a true attachment to this idealized figure will protect the young man from the dangerous enticements of the evil women, against whom he proceeds to warn him.

5. strange woman is certainly 'adulteress' here.

6 For at the window of my house
I looked forth through my lattice;
7 And I beheld among the simple ones,
I discerned among the youths,
A young man void of understanding,
8 Passing through the street near her corner,
And he went the way to her house;
9 In the twilight, in the evening of the day,
In the [a] blackness of night and the darkness.
10 And, behold, there met him a woman
With the attire of an harlot, and [b] wily of heart.
11 She is [c] clamorous and wilful;
Her feet abide not in her house:

[a] Heb. *pupil* (of the eye). [b] Or, *close* Heb. *guarded.* [c] Or, *turbulent*

---

6. lattice. This refers to the familiar Oriental window with its frequently elaborate lattice-work without glass that forms an effective screen from the street though permitting the watcher within to see all that is going on without (cf. *HDB.* 'House,' and Mackie's *Bible Manners and Customs*, p. 96, for illustration). The LXX represents the woman herself as being at the window, but this, of course, is not in agreement with verse 10.

8. her corner. That is the corner where her house is, for the next clause should be more general than our version makes it, viz. 'strolling along the road in the direction of her house.' Such aimless wandering is discountenanced in Ecclus. ix. 7.

9. In the twilight. Note the powerful poetical descriptiveness of this verse, as if it would cover all the hours of darkness.

10. the attire. Here the married woman is supposed to have dressed herself like a harlot, though, as we have already seen, it is uncertain whether any special dress distinguished the class.

wily. The meaning is rather uncertain, but it is derived from a root which means secret, so that probably the translation is sufficiently accurate.

11. clamorous and wilful. Perhaps best translated, as Toy does, 'boisterous and gadabout.' In Ecclus. xxvi. 10 it is part of a father's duty to keep a daughter from wandering as she will, but Song of Songs iii. 2 shows us that a woman's liberty even after nightfall was not generally curtailed.

Now she is in the streets, now in the broad places, 12
And lieth in wait at every corner.
So she caught him, and kissed him, 13
[a] *And* with an impudent face she said unto him:
Sacrifices of peace offerings [b] are with me; 14
This day have I paid my vows.
Therefore came I forth to meet thee, 15
Diligently to seek thy face, and I have found thee.
I have spread my couch with [c] carpets of tapestry, 16
With striped cloths of the yarn of Egypt.
I have [d] perfumed my bed 17
With myrrh, aloes, and cinnamon.
Come, let us take our fill of love until the morning; 18
Let us solace ourselves with loves.
For the goodman is not at home, 19

[a] Heb. *She hardened her face, and said.*
[b] Or, *were due from me*
[c] Or, *cushions*
[d] Or, *sprinkled*

---

13. So she caught him. The verbs in this verse should be in the present tense, which adds to the dramatic and vivid power of the scene.

with an impudent face. Better 'with wanton look.'

14. Sacrifices. The term here employed designates the peace offerings (see Lev. vii. 11, 12), from which passage it will be seen that they provided an ample entertainment for a feast. The point of saying 'this day' is, as the passage in Leviticus indicates, that the food had to be consumed on the same day on which the offering was made. It is a terrible irony in the statement that this woman turns the religious sacrifice into the elements of a sinful orgy.

15. Therefore. That is, inasmuch as she is well provided with material for entertainment.

16. carpets. The word only occurs again in xxxi. 22, and probably means either 'coverlets' or 'cushions.' The words 'of tapestry' are an unauthorized addition.

17. I have perfumed. Cf. Song of Songs iv. 14. This is a practice of a later and luxurious age, as the perfumes here named are only found mentioned in post-exilic books.

19. goodman. This may be a somewhat slighting reference to her husband, though the Hebrew is simply 'the man.'

He is gone a long journey:
20 He hath taken a bag of money with him;
He will come home at the full moon.
21 With her much fair speech she causeth him to yield,
With the flattering of her lips she forceth him away.
22 He goeth after her [a] straightway,
As an ox goeth to the slaughter,
Or as [b] fetters to the correction of the fool;
23 Till an arrow strike through his liver;

[a] Heb. *suddenly*.

[b] Or, one in *fetters* The text is probably corrupt.

---

20. full moon. That is the next feast, probably a fortnight later than the scene here indicated.

21. forceth him away. Literally, 'carries him off,' that is, 'seduces him.' The verbs in both clauses are used in other passages of the O. T. for the leading away of Israel after other gods.

22. straightway, or, with the margin, 'suddenly,' does not make a very good sense, seeing that the description has spoken of a long persuasion as being requisite; so that it is better to follow the LXX here, and render 'enticed,' or 'persuaded.'

as fetters. This clause, as it now stands, gives no clear meaning. The word rendered 'fetters' only occurs again in Isa. iii. 18, for 'anklets.' It appears as if the text is corrupt, for the LXX and other versions render 'as a dog to bonds.' By a slight alteration of the Hebrew, Toy secures the meaning 'as a calf that is led to the stall.' The most that can be said is that some such comparison to the unresisting movement of a beast to its destruction is meant.

23. Till an arrow. Here, again, it appears that some original corruption of the text must be supposed. The LXX and other versions read, 'as a stag shot in the liver with an arrow,' as these have understood the word rendered 'fool' in the previous verse to be the word for 'stag.'

liver occurs again in Lam. ii. 11 as the seat of life (cf. Job xvi. 13), an idea that was common in Babylonian and Assyrian writings. See article 'Liver' in *Enc. Bib.* The word is almost identical with the Hebrew word for 'glory,' and in several passages in the Psalms it should probably be read instead of that word (cf. Ps. vii. 5; xvi. 9, &c.). Further, many commentators put this clause last in the verse, and make the whole verse refer to the foolishness and destruction of the bird.

As a bird hasteth to the snare,
And knoweth not that it is for his life.
Now therefore, *my* sons, hearken unto me, 24
And attend to the words of my mouth.
Let not thine heart decline to her ways, 25
Go not astray in her paths.
For she hath cast down many wounded: 26
Yea, all her slain are a mighty host.
Her house is the way to [a] Sheol, 27
Going down to the chambers of death.

Doth not wisdom cry, 8
And understanding put forth her voice?
In the top of high places by the way, 2
Where the paths meet, she standeth;
Beside the gates, at the entry of the city, 3
At the coming in at the doors, she crieth aloud:
Unto you, O men, I call; 4
And my voice is to the sons of men.

[a] Or, *the grave*

---

27. way. In the original this is plural, and may probably signify that there are many ways leading to Sheol that start from her house. Again, the idea is that of premature physical death.

chambers of death. This phrase is probably nothing more than a parallel expression for Sheol in the previous clause.

viii. **1. wisdom.** To pass from the last chapter to this one is like passing from a close valley full of poisonous vapour to the brilliant and sunny uplands of the mountains. The personification of wisdom that is found here may probably be based upon Job xxviii. It is certainly an advance upon that passage, and is itself most likely the foundation of two later parallels to be found in the Book of Wisdom vii. 8 to viii. 21, and Ecclus. i. 1–20, xxiv.

2. the top of high places. Probably 'head of thoroughfares,' where the paths meet. Probably simply 'in the streets.'

3. coming in at the doors: more likely the entrance of the gates, meaning the elaborate gateways of the city, more or less like the double bars to be found in such a city as York.

5 O ye simple, understand [a] subtilty;
And, ye fools, be ye of an understanding heart.
6 Hear, for I will speak excellent things;
And the opening of my lips shall be right things.
7 For my mouth shall utter truth;
And wickedness is an abomination to my lips.
8 All the words of my mouth [b] are in righteousness;
There is nothing crooked or perverse in them.
9 They are all plain to him that understandeth,
And right to them that find knowledge.
10 Receive my instruction, and not silver;
And knowledge rather than choice gold.
11 For wisdom is better than [c] rubies;
And all the things that may be desired are not to be compared unto her.
12 I wisdom have made [a] subtilty my dwelling,
And find out [d] knowledge *and* discretion.

[a] Or, *prudence* [b] Or, *are righteousness* [c] See Job xxviii. 18.
[d] Or, *knowledge of witty inventions*

---

5. subtilty. See i. 4, note.

heart. See ii. 2 note.

6. excellent things. Toy considers it better by a slight change of the Hebrew word to render 'true things.'

7. wickedness is an abomination. By a slight change of the Hebrew we obtain the meaning of the LXX, 'false lips are an abomination to me,' which probably represents the correct form of the original.

9. plain should probably rather be 'true,' and, so rendered, the verse contains a very high ethical principle, the man, namely, that is willing to receive the truth shall be at once able to recognize it as such (cf. John vii. 17). The interesting question occurs as to whether Jesus Himself gained the hint of the teaching therein elaborated from this passage.

11. rubies. See iii. 15, note.

12. made . . . my dwelling. This expression, if correct, stands alone, and a slight alteration gives the better meaning 'I, Wisdom, possess intelligence.'

find out. Better, 'come into possession of.'

The fear of the LORD is to hate evil: 13
Pride, and arrogancy, and the evil way,
And the froward mouth, do I hate.
Counsel is mine, and [a] sound knowledge: 14
I am understanding; I have might.
By me kings reign, 15
And princes decree justice.
By me [b] princes rule, 16
And nobles, *even* all the judges [c] of the earth.
I love them that love me; 17
And those that seek me [d] diligently shall find me.
Riches and honour are with me; 18
Yea, [e] durable riches and righteousness.

[a] Or, *effectual working* [b] Or, *rulers*
[c] Many ancient authorities read, *of righteousness.* [d] Or, *early.*
[e] Or, *ancient*

---

13. The verse, as now placed, interrupts the connexion between verses 12 and 14, and, further than that, the two parts of the verse do not accord, as the first clause is obviously the statement of the writer, and the second half of the verse the utterance of Wisdom. The probability is that two distinct and isolated aphorisms have here crept from the margin into the text and been combined by some scribe.

14. I am understanding. This translation is scarcely permissible, and should be in agreement with the other clauses, 'I have understanding.'

16. all the judges. Some editors follow the LXX here and render 'and rulers govern the earth,' but the Hebrew is intelligible without any alteration. The writer's conception of government is a wide and liberal one, and he is free both from national prejudice and the somewhat slavish fear of the ruler shown in Eccles. x. 20. It is interesting to compare this passage with Plato's idea that the true form of government would be reached when all kings were philosophers.

17. seek ... diligently. As in i. 28, the meaning is probably 'seek' alone. Again, we may compare as based upon the idea here stated the teaching of the fourth gospel (see John v. 40), and Tennyson's well-known line, 'Our wills are ours to make them Thine.'

18. durable. This is more likely to be correctly rendered

19 My fruit is better than gold, yea, than fine gold;
And my [a] revenue than choice silver.
20 I walk in the way of righteousness,
In the midst of the paths of judgement:
21 That I may cause those that love me to inherit substance,
And that I may fill their treasuries.
22 The LORD [b] possessed me [c] in the beginning of his way,

[a] Or, *increase* [b] Or, *formed* [c] Or, *as*

'choice.' The meaning here, and 'ancient' given in the margin, though possible meanings, are not so appropriate. By the latter is supposed to be signified 'inherited riches,' and Plumptre quotes from Aesch. *Agam.* l. 43 the line which speaks of the great honour that is placed upon the riches which rulers have inherited from their remote ancestors.

righteousness. Here better 'prosperity.' The word has very often the significance of good fortune, and that seems to be its most appropriate meaning here.

19. revenue. Probably 'increase' of the margin, or 'produce,' is more in agreement with the agricultural figure employed.

22. With this verse begins a very fine poetical description of the creation of Wisdom and her activity before the world was brought into being. The LXX marks the transition by an explanatory introduction, which is undoubtedly a note of the scribe, and not part of the original text. The passage that follows is one of the most remarkable in the book. As we have already seen, it has close resemblances with passages in other sections of the Wisdom literature, but none of these rises to a higher level than does this section. While it begins with the thought of Wisdom as the creation of Jahweh, it is sufficiently influenced by the wider conceptions of Greek philosophy to present this personality as related to the whole universe, and as controlling the life of the race. The thought marks, therefore, a very great advance upon anything that had been previously written in Jewish circles, and has even a more philosophical grasp than some of the writings which follow it. The passage played a great rôle in subsequent thought, for it lies at the back of much of the speculation of Philo, and at a subsequent period was greatly employed by Christian theologians in support of their doctrine of the person of Christ through their identification of Wisdom in this passage with the Logos of the fourth gospel. See in particular the orations of Athanasius, Book II, chaps. xvi to xxii.

22. possessed. Better rendered 'created.'

[a] Before his works of old.
I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, 23
Or ever the earth was.
When there were no depths, I was brought forth ; 24
When there were no fountains abounding with water.
Before the mountains were settled, 25
Before the hills was I brought forth :
While as yet he had not made the earth, nor the fields, 26

[a] Or, *The first of*

---

way. This has the meaning 'procedure' in Job, and may be rendered here 'creation.'

Before. Better, 'the first of.'

Some Christian commentators are hampered by their theological presuppositions from translating this verse freely in accordance with the suggestions made above, but we must not allow the thoughts of a later time and the discussions about the person of Christ to weigh with us in frankly deciding upon the most likely meaning of a Hebrew poet. See, for example, Perowne's note on the passage.

23. set up. Better 'fashioned,' but the words here and in the following verses are too general to be limited to definite periods in the process of generation, as is done by some scholars.

from everlasting. The Hebrew words denote the time that is hidden by distance, 'indefinite,' but not, as Toy remarks, 'with the modern sense of the temporally infinite.'

24. To understand this and the following verses there must be a clear conception of the ideas of cosmogony that were then current. These are best obtained for the English reader in *HBD.*, article 'Cosmogony,' which contains not only an excellent discussion on the subject, but has a diagram which puts the whole matter very clearly. The earth was supposed to be floating in the great ocean, whose 'fountains' were channels that communicated between it and the solid earth, and which occasionally overflowed and flooded the world. The foundations of the mountains passed down into this great deep. The waters that were above the firmament were prevented from descending upon the earth by the solid firmament in which moved the heavenly bodies, but which was also pierced by the windows of heaven through which the rain came.

24. depths. This includes probably all forms of water, not only upon the earth, but the subterranean ocean that lay below it.

25. settled. See Ps. xviii. 7 ; Jonah ii. 6.

26. fields. This meaning is merely conjectural, but nothing

Nor the [a] beginning of the dust of the world.
27 When he [b] established the heavens, I was there:
When he set a circle upon the face of the deep:
28 When he made firm the skies above:
When the fountains of the deep became strong:
29 When he gave to the sea [c] its bound,
That the waters should not transgress his commandment:
When he [d] marked out the foundations of the earth:
30 Then I was by him, *as* a master workman
And I [e] was daily *his* delight,
[f] Rejoicing always before him;
31 [f] Rejoicing in his habitable earth;

[a] Or, *sum* [b] Or, *prepared* [c] Or, *his decree*
[d] Or, *appointed* [e] Or, *had delight continually*
[f] Or, *Sporting*

---

more satisfactory can be suggested. Toy is inclined to omit it altogether.

27. circle. This may be 'vault,' with reference to the solid firmament (see above), or if 'circle' is taken, the reference will be to the horizon of the surrounding ocean (cf. Job xxii. 14, where the same uncertainty is found). Probably 'vault' is correct in both passages.

28. skies. Rather, 'clouds.'

became strong. This ought more probably to be translated in the active, as with the LXX, 'fixed fast.'

30. master workman. The word so rendered is only found once again, in Jer. lii. 15 R. V. marg., where it occurs in the plural, and in slightly differing form. The meaning here given, or that of 'architect' or 'artist,' is supported by the Book of Wisdom vii. 22, where this term is applied to Wisdom, and it is thought that the writer may have derived it from this passage. A slight alteration of the Hebrew form supplies a word that occurs in Lam. iv. 5, which may be rendered 'foster-child' or 'ward,' which seems on the whole to give the best meaning here. (Cf. Book of Wisdom ix. 9.)

I was . . . his delight. The translation of this phrase is again uncertain, as the original may also mean 'I experienced delight,' and that is the more probable rendering owing to the context.

31. habitable earth. This may simply mean 'world,' and Toy considers that the following clause should be omitted alto-

And my delight was with the sons of men.
Now therefore, *my* sons, hearken unto me: 32
For blessed are they that keep my ways.
Hear instruction, and be wise, 33
And refuse it not.
Blessed is the man that heareth me, 34
Watching daily at my gates,
Waiting at the posts of my doors.
For whoso findeth me findeth life, 35
And shall [a] obtain favour of the LORD.
But he that [b] sinneth against me wrongeth his own soul: 36
All they that hate me love death.

Wisdom hath builded her house, 9
She hath hewn out her seven pillars:

[a] Heb. *draw forth.* [b] Or, *misseth me*

---

gether, as an obvious gloss introduced by some editor for the purpose of connecting the activity of wisdom with human life.

36. sinneth against. Better translated 'misseth,' as in the margin, since that preserves the contrast with 'findeth' in the previous verse.

his own soul is properly 'himself.'

ix. This chapter contains two obviously contrasted pictures of wisdom and folly, between which is inserted a section of general teaching (verses 7–12), supposed by some to be an address of Wisdom, but which is much more probably a set of aphorisms drawn from some other source and put in this place by some later editor. The student should read the closely connected passages 1–6 and 13–18 side by side.

1. house. Wisdom is here presented as mistress of a palace, to which she invites those who would be her followers as guests at a great feast. The figure of the house has played a large part in later allegorical literature, as, for example, Chaucer's 'Hous of Fame,' Bunyan's 'House of the Interpreter' and 'Palace Beautiful,' and may it not be said, with reverence, our Lord's own reference to the Father's house of many mansions? The idea of the feast also and the summons thereto may very well lie at the base of the N.T. parables in Matt. xxii and Luke xiv.

hewn out. Probably, as with the LXX, 'erected.'

seven pillars. It is impossible to tell whether this number is

2 She hath killed her beasts; she hath mingled her wine;
She hath also furnished her table.
3 She hath sent forth her maidens, she crieth
Upon the highest places of the city,
4 Whoso is simple, let him turn in hither:
As for him that is void of understanding, she saith to him,
5 Come, eat ye of my bread,
And drink of the wine which I have mingled.
6 [a] Leave off, ye simple ones, and live;
And walk in the way of understanding.

7 He that correcteth a scorner getteth to himself shame:
And he that reproveth a wicked man *getteth* himself a blot.
8 Reprove not a scorner, lest he hate thee:
Reprove a wise man, and he will love thee.
9 Give *instruction* to a wise man, and he will be yet wiser:
Teach a righteous man, and he will increase in learning.

[a] Or, *Forsake the simple*

---

chosen as a significant number, denoting the beauty of the house; as a round number, denoting many; or because seven was a customary number in the architecture of the time. The pillars spoken of are probably those surrounding the court, and it may be that in the gallery behind them was spread the feast.

2. The statements here made all signify the special preparations for a ceremonial occasion. The slaying may refer to sacrifice in the first instance (cf. vii. 14), the mixing of wine most likely to the spicing of it, or, not so probably, to the Greek custom of mingling it with water; but cf. Ps. cii. 9.

3. She hath sent forth. We are reminded here of the special messengers of Matt. xxii. 3.

she crieth. Better, 'to cry.'

highest places. This may either mean places of public resort, or those so elevated that the voice of the messengers can reach far and wide.

7. See above for the general character of these verses.

shame. Better, perhaps, 'insult.'

blot. This has probably a somewhat similar meaning to the former word, and is well rendered by Toy 'reviling.'

The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: 10
And the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.
For by me thy days shall be multiplied, 11
And the years of thy life shall be increased.
If thou art wise, thou art wise for thyself: 12
And if thou scornest, thou alone shalt bear it.

[a] The foolish woman is clamorous; 13
She is [b] simple, and knoweth nothing.

[a] Or, *Folly* [b] Heb. *simplicity.*

---

10. Holy One. Inasmuch as the Hebrew form is plural, some would render here 'holy men,' but the parallel shows almost certainly that God must be meant, and the plural form was not uncommon in later Hebrew (cf. Eccles. xii. 1, where the word rendered 'creator' is also plural).

11. by me. The LXX and other versions render 'by it,' which is probably correct, as there is no other evidence of personal address in this section.

12. If thou art wise. This verse emphasizes the teaching that is prominent in Ezekiel of individual responsibility, and of every man bearing his own burden. The doctrine here taught is found nowhere else in the book. The LXX gives a different turn to the thought, and also has a somewhat lengthy addition to the passage, reading as follows:—'If thou art wise, thou art wise for thyself, and if thou art a scoffer, thou alone must bear the brunt. Who stays himself on lies feeds on wind (cf. Eccles. *passim*), and he will follow after winged birds. The ways of his own vineyard he forsakes, and wanders from the paths of his own field. He walks through a waterless waste, through a land that is desert, and with his hands he garners barrenness.' We cannot tell at all what the origin of these verses may be, but it is not likely that they have behind them a Hebrew original.

13. See note at the introduction of this chapter on the general character of the following verses.

The foolish woman. Probably this should be simply 'folly,' though the form of the original is somewhat irregular and indefinite.

simple. A slight alteration of the Hebrew gives the meaning 'seductive,' which is read by several versions.

nothing. There is again some uncertainty about the phrase, as the Greek renders 'she knows not shame,' an appropriate meaning if we could be certain that it represents the original.

14 And she sitteth at the door of her house,
On a seat in the high places of the city,
15 To call to them that pass by,
Who go right on their ways,
16 Whoso is simple, let him turn in hither:
And as for him that is void of understanding, she saith to him,
17 Stolen waters are sweet,
And bread *eaten* in secret is pleasant.
18 But he knoweth not that [a] the dead are there;
That her guests are in the depths of Sheol.

10 The proverbs of Solomon.

A wise son maketh a glad father:
But a foolish son is the heaviness of his mother.
2 Treasures of wickedness profit nothing:

[a] Or, *the shades* Heb. *Rephaim*.

---

15. go right. The word 'right' should be omitted, as the signification is simply 'those who go forward.'

17. Stolen waters. There is no doubt that the figure here reverts to that of chapter vii, and the particular temptation of folly is regarded as being that to sexual immorality. It is possible that the term 'water' is suggested by the figure found in v. 15, 16. See the notes there.

18. the dead. Literally 'Rephaim.' See note on ii. 18.

Again the Greek makes a somewhat long addition in this place, but it is scarcely worth reproducing. Its main interest is that it contains the metaphor of a 'fountain' for a 'wife,' which we find also in v. 15, 18; Song of Songs iv. 12. See note on Eccles. xii. 1.

x. The proverbs of Solomon. This general title applies to the whole section from this verse to xxii. 16. On its significance and general relation to the book, see Introduction, p. 10. The general type of the proverbs contained in it is that of a twofold antithetic statement. On the one apparent exception see the note on xix. 7.

2. Plumptre compares with this the English proverb 'Ill got,

But righteousness delivereth from death.
The LORD will not suffer the soul of the righteous to famish: 3
But he thrusteth away the desire of the wicked.
He becometh poor that dealeth with a slack hand: 4
But the hand of the diligent maketh rich.
He that gathereth in summer is [a] a wise son: 5
But he that sleepeth in harvest is a son [b] that causeth shame.
Blessings are upon the head of the righteous: 6
But [c] violence covereth the mouth of the wicked.

[a] Or, *a son that doeth wisely* [b] Or, *that doeth shamefully*
[c] Or, *the mouth of the wicked covereth violence*

---

ill gone,' which, of course, only parallels the first clause. The second is the positive and contrasted statement.

righteousness. The most difficult question here to decide is whether righteousness is already limited to the meaning 'almsgiving,' which it undoubtedly had acquired by the second century B.C. (cf. Ecclus. iii. 30, xxix. 12, and also Matt. vi. 1, 2). There is some indication that the latter may be the meaning here owing to the fact that the idea of treasure is introduced into the first clause, and the writer may, therefore, mean to contrast the foolish acquisition with the wise use of money.

3. thrusteth away. Probably better 'disappoints the evil desire.'

4. He becometh poor. The slightest change of the Hebrew enables us to preserve the antithesis more accurately, thus, 'A slack hand makes poor; a diligent hand makes rich.' This may be said to be a commonplace of the proverbial law of all nations, and the student will find many examples in Malan's book, of which we may only quote one Arab proverb: 'Diligence is a merchandise that yields large profits.'

5. He that gathereth. The meaning of this saying is obvious, and finds an interesting parallel in a line of the Greek poet Hesiod, 'Show thy servants while in the middle of summer that it will not always be summer.' The LXX varies here, and has also an additional verse.

6. upon the head. Cf. Gen. xlix. 26, the reference probably being to the good gifts of God.

violence covereth. These words occur again as the second clause of verse 11, where it is more easily understood. Here it is not obvious what the force of the contrast with the first part of

7 The memory of the just is blessed:
But the name of the wicked shall rot.
8 The wise in heart will receive commandments:
But [a] a prating fool [b] shall fall.
9 He that walketh uprightly walketh surely:
But he that perverteth his ways shall be known.
10 He that winketh with the eye causeth sorrow:
[c] But [a] a prating fool [b] shall fall.

---

[a] Heb. *the foolish of lips.* [b] Or, *shall be overthrown* or *laid low*

[c] The Sept. and Syr. read, *But he that rebuketh openly maketh peace.*

---

the verse can be, as the meaning of 'covereth the mouth' is probably 'controls the speech.' The LXX renders 'untimely grief shall cover,' which may represent the original text. The alteration is probably due to assimilation to verse 11 or to substitution of the clause in that verse for the original of this one, which has been lost.

7. shall rot. Frankenberg suggests that a better contrast is afforded by the alteration of one letter in the Hebrew, which would then read, 'will be cursed,' and this is a very probable emendation. Bunyan applies the verse to the fate of Heedless and Toobold in the Enchanted Ground.

8. a prating fool. This clause occurs again in verse 10, and a similar confusion to that noted above in verse 6 may be possible here. Both clauses are quite simple in this verse, but the contrast is not obvious, unless it be between the wise man who listens and the fool who talks, while the good fortune of the former is simply implied and the evil fortune of the latter is explicitly stated. Cf. Eccles. viii. 5.

9. shall be known. This represents the meaning of the original, but the necessary contrast is only implied, and not stated. We must understand it to mean that an evil man who persists in his evil courses will come to grief eventually, and so manifest his folly, but we are tempted to make the slight alteration in the Hebrew that is requisite to produce the translation of ii. 15, 'shall smart for it,' which is probably correct.

10. He that winketh. See vi. 13, and note.

a prating fool. These words, as has been noted, occur above in verse 8, but here they make no appropriate contrast whatever, and are probably introduced in error. The LXX has an entirely different translation, which makes excellent sense, and probably represents the lost original. It reads, 'He who

The mouth of the righteous is a fountain of life : 11
But [a] violence covereth the mouth of the wicked.
Hatred stirreth up strifes : 12
But love covereth all transgressions.
In the lips of him that hath discernment wisdom is found : 13
But a rod is for the back of him that is void of [b] understanding.
Wise men lay up knowledge : 14
But the mouth of the foolish is a present destruction.
The rich man's wealth is his strong city : 15

[a] Or, *the mouth of the wicked covereth violence* [b] Heb. *heart.*

---

reproves openly makes peace,' thus laying stress upon the straightforward conduct of the man who clears up misunderstandings, as contrasted with the shuffling methods of him who tries to pass by unsatisfactory conduct.

11. a fountain of life. This is a figure that recurs throughout the book, and may lie underneath two famous verses in the fourth gospel, John iv. 10, vii. 38.

violence. See note on verse 6 above. The contrast is here a clear one between the speech of the righteous and that of the wicked.

12. love covereth. Obviously by forgiving, and in this sense the words are quoted in a slightly different form in 1 Peter iv. 8. With a different application they are also quoted in Jas. v. 20. In neither passage are these writers following the LXX, which here has a different rendering, namely, 'hides all those who are not lovers of strife.' The proverb may have been a common one current in the form in which we find it in the N.T.

13. a rod. Similar words occur more appropriately in xxvi. 3. Here the difficulty is to relate the second clause quite clearly to the first. As the former is spoken of the wise speech of the prudent man, we should expect something to be said in the second clause about the foolish speech of the imprudent, instead of which we have brought before us the means of his chastisement whereby he may be led to prudence. Some alteration in the Hebrew gives the excellent meaning 'folly is in the mouth of the fool.' If we do not so read, the clause seems correct in sense but misplaced. Plumptre quotes a trenchant Egyptian proverb, 'A youth has a back that he may attend to his teacher.'

14. a present destruction. Better, 'an imminent destruction.'

15. The rich man's wealth. This clause occurs again in

The destruction of the poor is their poverty.
16 The labour of the righteous *tendeth* to life;
The increase of the wicked to sin.
17 He [a] is in the way of life that heedeth [b] correction:
But he that forsaketh reproof [c] erreth.
18 He that hideth hatred is of lying lips;
And he that uttereth a slander is a fool.
19 In the multitude of words there wanteth not transgression:

[a] Or, *is a way* [b] Or, *instruction* [c] Or, *causeth to err*

---

xviii. 11. Perowne says well, 'We have here an instance of the candour and sobriety of the moral teaching of this book. Wealth has its advantages and poverty its drawbacks, and the fact is honestly stated.'

16. The labour, rather, the wages that are the fruit of labour.

to sin. If we retain this reading, then we must suppose that the writer is thinking of the consequences of sin without expressing them, but a slight alteration gives the meaning 'destruction,' which is probably the word that originally stood here (cf. Rom. vi. 23, where this passage may have been in Paul's mind).

17. erreth, or, with the margin, 'causeth to err.' Either gives good sense.

18. He that hideth hatred, that is, who cloaks hatred under the semblance of friendliness (cf. xxvi. 26). The LXX gives a different meaning, namely, 'righteous lips conceal hatred,' which must represent some different Hebrew. No very satisfactory meaning is to be got out of the first clause as it stands in contrast with the second, and the LXX here affords the best meaning.

19. In the multitude of words. The thought of this proverb is one that is common to many people (see Malan's notes on the verse). We can only quote one Italian proverb here, 'There is little conscience in great eloquence' (cf. Ecclus. xx. 8), and the teaching on the tongue in Jas. iii, where there is no doubt the writer had the Book of Proverbs in mind. We may cite our own English proverb, 'Speech is silvern, but silence is golden,' though we must not forget the truth of George Eliot's somewhat cynical addition, 'Speech is silvern, but silence does not always brood over a full nest.' There was a saying of the Jewish rabbi Jehoshua, 'Speech for a shekel, silence for two,' and another of their sayings was, 'Silence is the cure of a thing.' See further

But he that refraineth his lips [a] doeth wisely.
The tongue of the righteous is *as* choice silver: 20
The heart of the wicked is little worth.
The lips of the righteous feed many: 21
But the foolish die for lack of [b] understanding.
The blessing of the LORD, it maketh rich, 22
And [c] he addeth no sorrow therewith.
It is as sport to a fool to do wickedness: 23
[d] And *so is* wisdom to a man of understanding.
The fear of the wicked, it shall come upon him: 24
And the desire of the righteous shall be granted.
[e] When the whirlwind passeth, the wicked is no more: 25
But the righteous is an everlasting foundation.

[a] Or, *is wise*
[b] Heb. *heart.*
[c] Or, *toil addeth nothing thereto*
[d] Or, *But a man of understanding hath wisdom*
[e] Or, *As the whirlwind passeth, so is the wicked no more*

Sayings of the Jewish Fathers, chaps. i and iii. Cf. Prov. xvii. 27, 28.

22. he addeth. As the margin indicates, there is another possible translation given by some versions and supported by many scholars, namely, 'toil addeth nothing thereto,' but the statement is neither accurate in itself nor is the thought, that human labour is of no account in relation to what God Himself gives, one found in the O.T. (cf. xiv. 23).

23. so is wisdom. The rendering here given means that as wickedness is amusement to a fool, so wisdom is amusement to a man of understanding; but to preserve the parallel, we should have had 'goodness' in place of 'wisdom.' Some scholars, therefore, alter the Hebrew, and render, 'but it is abomination to a man of understanding.'

24. The fear of the wicked. The orthodox opinion of Jewish writers is expressed in this verse, an opinion which, as Toy points out, is combated in Job iii. 25, but the problem of that book is not dealt with here. The thought of this verse is put pithily in the Scottish proverb, 'Ill-doers are ay ill-dreaders.'

25. is an everlasting foundation. 'Has an everlasting foundation' would better express the meaning in English (cf. Ps. xxxvii. 35-38; Matt. vii. 24-27). It is interesting to think that

26 As vinegar to the teeth, and as smoke to the eyes,
So is the sluggard to them that send him.
27 The fear of the LORD [a] prolongeth days:
But the years of the wicked shall be shortened.
28 The hope of the righteous *shall be* gladness:
But the expectation of the wicked shall perish.
29 The way of the LORD is a strong hold to the upright;
But [b] it is a destruction to the workers of iniquity.
30 The righteous shall never be removed:
But the wicked shall not dwell in the [c] land.
31 The mouth of the righteous [d] bringeth forth wisdom:
But the froward tongue shall be cut off.
32 The lips of the righteous know what is acceptable:
But the mouth of the wicked [e] *speaketh* frowardness.
11 [f] A false balance is an abomination to the LORD:
But a just weight is his delight.

[a] Heb. *addeth.*
[b] Or, *destruction shall be to, &c.*
[c] Or, *earth*
[d] Or, *buddeth with*
[e] Or, is
[f] Heb. *A balance of deceit.*

---

this verse may have been in the mind of Jesus when He uttered the parable there related.

26. As vinegar. Proverbs of this type are found mainly in chaps. xxv and xxvi, and it is, therefore, possible that this verse may be out of place. 'It is,' says Plumptre, 'perhaps the nearest approach in the whole book to the humorous,' but he has surely forgotten such verses as xxv. 24, xxvi. 3, and 13-17. The LXX has for the second clause 'so is lawlessness to them who practise it,' which may have arisen from a misreading of the Hebrew.

28. Cf. 24 above.

29. The way of the LORD. If this be correct, then 'the way of the Lord' is used here with a unique metaphor attached to it, and it seems better to translate it 'The Lord is a stronghold to the man who is upright in his way, but destruction to the workers of iniquity.'

30. the land. See ii. 21, 22 and notes.

31, 32. It is possible that the clauses of these two verses are arranged in the figure of speech that is known as a *chiasm*, that is, the first and fourth lines correspond, and the second and third.

xi. **1. a just weight.** Cf. the legal enactments on this matter

When pride cometh, then cometh shame: 2
But with the lowly is wisdom.
The integrity of the upright shall guide them: 3
But the perverseness of the treacherous shall destroy them.
Riches profit not in the day of wrath: 4
But righteousness delivereth from death.
The righteousness of the perfect shall [a] direct his way: 5
But the wicked shall fall by his own wickedness.
The righteousness of the upright shall deliver them: 6
But they that deal treacherously shall be taken in their
  own mischief.
When a wicked man dieth, *his* expectation shall perish: 7
And the hope of [b] iniquity perisheth.

[a] Or, *make straight* or *plain* [b] Or, *strong* men

---

in Lev. xix. 36; Deut. xxv. 15. That there was a royal standard of weights and measures is shown 2 Sam. xiv. 26. The prevalency of dishonesty among traders in the matter is suggested by the recurrence of proverbs on the subject in xvi. 11, xx. 10, 23, and in the more severe statement of Ecclus. xxvi. 29. A curious comment on the passage is to be found in the Hanseatic Museum at Bergen, where the visitor will see the buying and selling weights of the old traders. It is unnecessary to say which set is the heavier!

2. When pride cometh. Cf. the English proverb, 'Pride goeth before a fall,' and many other parallels in Malan. Plumptre quotes a beautiful Rabbinic paraphrase of the second clause, 'Lowly souls become full of wisdom as the low place becomes full of water.'

4. day of wrath. With the prophets this phrase generally signifies a judgement upon the nation, but by a comparison of Job xxi. 30; Ecclus. v. 4-7 we find that the Wisdom literature gives it a more individualistic reference.

5. direct. Rather, 'make smooth.' Cf. the fine passage in Bunyan, *Pilgrim's Progress*, descriptive of the two ways that led to the right and left at the foot of the hill Difficulty.

6. be taken, either as in a net or as a captured city.

7. iniquity. This meaning is extremely improbable, and none of the various suggestions that have been made are feasible. The LXX gives a perfectly different turn to it, which cannot be

8 The righteous is delivered out of trouble,
And the wicked cometh in his stead.
9 With his mouth the godless man destroyeth his neighbour:
But through knowledge shall the righteous be delivered.
10 When it goeth well with the righteous, the city rejoiceth:
And when the wicked perish, there is shouting.
11 By the blessing of the upright the city is exalted:
But it is overthrown by the mouth of the wicked.
12 He that despiseth his neighbour is void of [a] wisdom:
But a man of understanding holdeth his peace.
13 He that goeth about as a talebearer revealeth secrets:
But he that is of a faithful spirit concealeth the matter.
14 Where no wise guidance is, the people falleth:
But in the multitude of counsellors there is safety.
15 He that is surety for a stranger [b] shall smart for it:
But he that hateth [c] suretiship is sure.
16 A gracious woman retaineth honour:

[a] Heb. *heart.* [b] Heb. *shall be sore broken.*
[c] Heb. *those that strike* hands.

---

obtained from the present text, nor is the idea expressed in it found in the Book of Proverbs. It reads, 'When a righteous man dies his hope does not perish, but the boast of the wicked perishes.' It seems that the original of the second clause has been lost, and that the words which now stand there constitute either a fragment of it or the segment of another proverb which is not in place here.

8. in his stead. This means that the wicked eventually becomes the permanent inheritor of trouble with which the righteous forms only a temporary acquaintance.

9. through knowledge. Probably knowledge of the wicked man's evil ways, which gives the righteous the opportunity of escaping from them.

11. Cf. Eccles. vii. 19.

14. Cf. xxiv. 6 for a special application of this more general political proverb.

15. for a stranger is simply 'for another.' On the general meaning of the words see note on vi. 1.

16. A gracious woman. The contrast here is between the

And violent men retain riches.
The merciful man doeth good to his own soul: 17
But he that is cruel troubleth his own flesh.
The wicked earneth deceitful wages: 18
But he that soweth righteousness *hath* a sure reward.
[a] He that is stedfast in righteousness *shall attain* unto life: 19
And he that pursueth evil *doeth it* to his own death.
They that are perverse in heart are an abomination to the LORD: 20
But such as are perfect in *their* way are his delight.
[b] *Though* hand *join* in hand, the evil man shall not be unpunished: 21
But the seed of the righteous shall be delivered.
As a [c] jewel of gold in a swine's snout, 22

---

[a] Or, *So righteousness* tendeth *to life, and he &c.*
[b] Or, *My hand upon it!* Heb. *Hand to hand.*
[c] Or, *ring*

---

quiet victories of a beautiful character, which consist in general honour and approval, and the rude victories of brute force, which at the best only consist in amassing and holding wealth. It is the only place in the book in which men and women are contrasted in the same verse. The LXX has a curious addition here, the origin of which it is impossible to trace, 'A gracious woman brings honour to her husband, but a woman who hates righteousness is a throne of dishonour. The slothful come to lack riches, but the manly stay themselves on riches.'

17. his own soul. Better, 'himself'; cf. viii. 36, and in the same way should 'his own flesh' of the next clause be translated.

18. deceitful. 'Delusive,' that is, 'transitory.'

21. Though hand join in hand. This is literally 'hand to hand,' and may be, as most suppose, a popular form of asseveration, like our phrase 'here's my hand upon it.' Thus the majority of modern editors translate 'assuredly.'

the seed. This is 'race,' not 'posterity.'

22. jewel, ring. The nose-ring was a common ornament among the Oriental women, and is referred to in various places in the O.T. (see Gen. xxiv. 47; Isa. iii. 21). For actual illustrations of the ornament, see Lane's *Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians*, App. A, p. 571. It is uncertain whether the modern

So is a fair woman which [a] is without discretion.
23 The desire of the righteous is only good:
But the expectation of the wicked is [b] wrath.
24 There is that scattereth, and increaseth yet more;
And there is that withholdeth [c] more than is meet, but *it tendeth* only to want.
25 The liberal soul shall be made fat:
And he that watereth shall be watered also himself.
26 He that withholdeth corn, the people shall curse him:
But blessing shall be upon the head of him that selleth it.
27 He that diligently seeketh good seeketh favour:

[a] Heb. *turneth aside from* [b] Or, *arrogance*
[c] Or, *what is justly due*

Western custom of putting a ring in a swine's snout to prevent it doing damage was customary in the East, but, if so, then there is even further point in the comparison here. Cf. Chaucer, *Wife of Bath's Prologue*, l. 785.

discretion. The force of the word might be better expressed by 'self-respect' or 'circumspection,' as it denotes not only an intellectual caution but a moral quality.

23. wrath. This word may also mean 'arrogance,' so that it is possible to understand the verse in two ways—either 'the righteous seek only that which is good, while the wicked are arrogant, and, therefore, self-seeking,' or 'the desire of the righteous brings about good results for themselves, while the desire of the wicked culminates in evil.'

24. There is that scattereth. This passage is obviously in the mind of Paul when he writes 2 Cor. ix. 6, and the verse forms the subject of old Mr. Honest's riddle in the Inn of Gaius:

'A man there was, though some did count him mad,
The more he cast away the more he had.'

more than is meet is an incorrect rendering of the Hebrew, the margin giving the accurate translation, 'what is justly due.'

26. He that withholdeth corn. This proverb is possibly based upon the experience of the Jews in contact with the civilization of Greek states, where the practice here alluded to was no uncommon one.

27. seeketh. The second word so translated probably means 'wins.' The further question in the verse is as to whether the

But he that searcheth after mischief, it shall come unto him.
He that trusteth in his riches shall fall: 28
But the righteous shall flourish as the green leaf.
He that troubleth his own house shall inherit the wind: 29
And the foolish shall be servant to the wise of heart.
The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life; 30
And he that is wise winneth souls.
Behold, the righteous shall be recompensed in the earth: 31
How much more the wicked and the sinner!
Whoso loveth [a] correction loveth knowledge: 12
But he that hateth reproof is brutish.
A good man shall obtain favour of the LORD: 2
But a man of wicked devices will he condemn.
A man shall not be established by wickedness: 3

[a] Or, *instruction*

---

favour mentioned is that of God or of men, but the latter seems more probable.

29. inherit the wind. See the frequent recurring phrase in Eccles., 'a striving after wind.'

servant is here, of course, 'slave,' and designates a fact that the foolish man will come to such poverty that he will be sold into slavery.

30. For **tree of life,** see note on iii. 18.

winneth souls is literally 'takes lives,' and the word rendered 'takes' is always in such connexions elsewhere equal to 'destroys'; but that meaning, of course, gives no sense here, so that it appears there must have been some original corruption of the Hebrew. The LXX translates 'from the fruits of righteousness grows a tree of life; but the lives of the lawless are taken away untimely,' and some such meaning is probably what is demanded. The present text is not only impossible in itself, but affords no antithesis.

31. recompensed. Here used in the definite sense of 'punished,' and the argument is an *a fortiori* one—if the righteous are punished, then the wicked will more certainly suffer. For the thought cf. Eccles. viii. 11. The LXX seems to have had a different text, as it translates, 'if the righteous is scarcely saved, where shall the ungodly and sinner appear?'—the form in which the verse is quoted in 1 Peter iv. 18.

But the root of the righteous shall never be moved.
4 A virtuous woman is a crown to her husband:
But she that [a] maketh ashamed is as rottenness in his bones.
5 The thoughts of the righteous are [b] just:
But the counsels of the wicked are deceit.
6 The words of the wicked [c] are of lying in wait for blood:
But the mouth of the upright shall deliver them.
7 [d] The wicked are overthrown, and are not:
But the house of the righteous shall stand.
8 A man shall be commended according to his wisdom:
But he that is of a perverse heart shall be despised.
9 Better is he that is lightly esteemed, and hath a servant,
Than he that honoureth himself, and lacketh bread.

[a] Or, *doeth shamefully* [b] Heb. *judgement*.
[c] Or, *are a lying in wait*
[d] Or, *Overthrow the wicked, and they are not*

---

xii. 4. **A virtuous woman.** Here we come upon a subject which is frequently referred to in the book, and specially in chap. xxxi. If evil women were painted in dark colours by the writers of these proverbs, they were also able to do justice to the noble character of the matrons who adorned Israel.

6. **are of lying in wait:** literally, 'are a lying-in-wait,' and this strong figure is well worth preserving. The words of wicked men are for the moment themselves regarded as bloodthirsty robbers (cf. i. 11). Wildeboer considers that the passage in chap. i is based upon this verse.

them. This word should probably be omitted, as it may be an interpretative addition of some scribe. It is more effective to leave the contrast quite general.

7. Cf. x. 25 and note.

8. **perverse.** This is perhaps rather too strong a word to express the thought of the original, which would be sufficiently met by such a term as 'one lacking in judgement.'

9. **lightly esteemed:** i. e. socially, the meaning being that a man is well-off who has sufficient comfort to live above poverty, even though men do not reckon him good enough to be in Society.

honoureth himself: better, 'pretends to riches greater than he possesses.' Some versions render the second part of the first clause 'is a servant to himself,' that is, 'does his own work'

A righteous man regardeth the life of his beast: 10
But the tender mercies of the wicked are cruel.
He that tilleth his land shall have plenty of bread: 11
But he that followeth after [a] vain *persons* is void of
understanding.
The wicked desireth [b] the net of evil men: 12
But the root of the righteous yieldeth *fruit*.

[a] Or, *vain* things [b] Or, *the prey*

(cf. Ecclus. x. 27). This translation is obviously based on a slight alteration of the Hebrew, and may accurately represent the original.

10. the life of his beast. The books of the law enjoin thoughtful kindness for animals (cf. Deut. xxv. 4, &c.), and the beautiful expression in Jonah iv. 11 is memorable as revealing the Hebrew thought about God's care for them (cf. 1 Cor. ix. 9). This proverb is popularly quoted in an inaccurate form, viz. 'A merciful man is merciful to his beast.'

tender mercies. Better, 'heart.'

11. 'In the second clause,' says Toy, 'the direct antithesis would be expressed by "will lack bread," but the Massoretic (that is, traditional) form of the proverb, perhaps for the sake of variety, states not the result but the quality of mind; such variations of apophthegms were doubtless common with the sages.'

vain persons. More likely, 'useless pursuits,' the original simply having the adjective without any indication of gender. The LXX adds here another proverb—'He who indulges in banquets of wine will leave dishonour in his stronghold.' It is impossible to decide as to the origin of these words.

12. The wicked desireth. The text in this verse is extremely difficult to interpret, and no satisfactory translation can be given of it. The R.V. text translates the existing Hebrew accurately, but yields no very obvious meaning. The two clauses do not present sufficient matter in common to produce a proper contrast. The first clause, when stripped of metaphor, is merely an identical proposition, while the second is quite unintelligible. The LXX, obviously from a slightly different text, gives an intelligible meaning, but the objection is still to be made that the ideas governing the two clauses have nothing in common. It reads 'The desires of the wicked are evil, but the roots of the righteous are firm.' Many emendations have been proposed, all of them more or less speculative. We must be content to leave it as a practically insoluble problem.

13 In the transgression of the lips is [a] a snare to the evil man:
But the righteous shall come out of trouble.
14 A man shall be satisfied with good by the fruit of his mouth:
And the doings of a man's hands shall be rendered unto him.
15 The way of the foolish is right in his own eyes:
But he that is wise hearkeneth unto counsel.
16 A fool's vexation is [b] presently known:
But a prudent man concealeth shame.
17 He that [c] uttereth truth sheweth forth righteousness,
But a false witness deceit.
18 There is that speaketh rashly like the piercings of a sword:
But the tongue of the wise is health.
19 The lip of truth shall be established for ever:
But a lying tongue is but for a moment.
20 Deceit is in the heart of them that devise evil:

[a] Or, *an evil snare* [b] Or, *openly* Heb. *in the day.*
[c] Heb. *breatheth out.*

Between verses 13 and 14 the LXX inserts another proverb, with apparent reference to those who love law-suits.

14. satisfied with good. 'Good' is probably an interpretative addition, and the real meaning of the words is that a man must take the consequence of his speech, thus forming an exact parallel to the second clause.

16. Toy's translation of this verse is good, and serves also the purpose of an interpretation of it—'A fool's anger is displayed on the spot, but a sensible man ignores an affront.'

17. righteousness. Possibly 'justice' would be better, and, if so, then 'injustice' rather than 'deceit' should be the translation in the second clause; but if 'deceit' is retained, then 'truth' should stand for righteousness in the first clause. The reference of the whole verse is undoubtedly to the habits of witnesses in courts of justice— a subject that is frequently alluded to in this book.

18. rashly, or thoughtlessly.

health, or 'healing.' The proverb signifies that while some men's speech wounds, the words of others are like healing balm.

20. Deceit. As in verse 17 above, this may also be translated 'injustice,' and the second clause may with great probability be

But to the counsellors of peace is joy.
There shall no mischief happen to the righteous: 21
But the wicked shall be filled with evil.
Lying lips are an abomination to the LORD: 22
But they that deal truly are his delight.
A prudent man concealeth knowledge: 23
But the heart of fools proclaimeth foolishness.
The hand of the diligent shall bear rule: 24
But [a] the slothful shall be put under taskwork.
[b] Heaviness in the heart of a man maketh it stoop; 25
But a good word maketh it glad.
The righteous is a guide to his neighbour: 26
But the way of the wicked causeth them to err.

[a] Heb. *slothfulness.* [b] Or, *Care*

---

rendered 'to the devisers of well-being there is justice,' which makes an excellent antithesis. If the present reading be retained for the second clause, cf. xxi. 15.

21. The LXX and other versions render 'no injustice is pleasing to the righteous,' which may well be the meaning of the first clause.

23. Cf. Ecclus. xxi. 26.

24. See xi. 29.

25. good word. Better, 'kind word,' which is more likely to be the correct meaning than is the LXX 'good news.'

26. Here again we have the difficulty of unrelated clauses, even if the translation of the R. V. could stand; but in the first clause the rendering is very questionable. 'Is a guide to' does not really represent the original, but is a mere paraphrase. The literal translation of the Hebrew is 'searches out,' which, of course, affords no intelligible meaning in the connexion. Many translate by the alteration of one word 'the righteous searches out his pasture,' conceiving it to be a metaphor from the feeding of cattle to signify the righteous man's finding of spiritual nourishment for himself. The A. V. here follows Hebrew traditional interpreters, and renders 'the righteous is more excellent than his neighbour,' but that does not solve the difficulty. We must either decide that the original text is corrupt beyond restoration, or that two unrelated clauses have here been connected. Probably both these statements may be correct.

27 [a] The slothful man [b] roasteth not that which he took in
hunting:
But the precious substance of men [c] *is to* the diligent.
28 In the way of righteousness is life;
And in the pathway thereof there is no death.
13 A wise son *heareth* his father's [d] instruction:
But a scorner heareth not rebuke.
2 A man shall eat good [e] by the fruit of his mouth:
But [f] the soul of the treacherous *shall eat* violence.

[a] Heb. *slothfulness.* [b] Or, *catcheth not his prey*
[c] Or, is to be *diligent* [d] Or, *correction* [e] Or, *from*
[f] Or, *the desire of the treacherous* is for *violence*

---

27. roasteth not. All the proverbs with reference to the sluggard seem to have more or less of a humorous character, and this one signifies either that the man is too lazy to cook what he has caught, or, as the margin indicates, to catch his own game at all. The second clause of the verse is, again, a difficulty, both because it seems unrelated to the first clause, and also because the translation is difficult. Obviously the contrast intended is between sloth and diligence, but just what is said about diligence it is not easy to discover. Some follow the A. V., which renders, 'the substance of a diligent man is precious'; others 'diligence is a valuable possession to a man'; while others, again, suppose the reference to be to a slave, and read 'a precious treasure to a man is one who is diligent.' The R. V. rendering is got by the insertion of a preposition, and perhaps gives as good a meaning as can be obtained, but one in no way clearly connected with the previous clause; so that what was said of the former verse is likely to be true here also.

28. in the pathway thereof. The R. V. translation of the second clause is unjustifiable for several reasons. The word rendered 'no' is really a negative particle which can only qualify a verb in the imperative, but there is no verb here, and, again, 'pathway' is a mere guess, and not a legitimate translation of the Hebrew as it stands. The ancient versions all understand, instead of the negative, the preposition 'to,' which is identical in form in Hebrew, only the vowel-point being altered, and these, of course, were never written until a much later date than the origin of the version. We must suppose, therefore, that the original read, 'the way of unrighteousness leads to death.'

xiii. **2.** For the first clause cf. xii. 14, with which this is practically identical. The marginal reading of the second clause

He that guardeth his mouth keepeth his life: 3
But he that openeth wide his lips shall have destruction.
The soul of the sluggard desireth, and hath nothing: 4
But the soul of the diligent shall be made fat.
A righteous man hateth lying: 5
But a wicked man [a] is loathsome, and cometh to shame.
Righteousness guardeth [b] him that is upright in the way: 6
But wickedness overthroweth [c] the sinner.
There is that [d] maketh himself rich, yet hath nothing: 7
There is that [d] maketh himself poor, yet hath great wealth.
The ransom of a man's life is his riches: 8
But the poor heareth no [e] threatening.
The light of the righteous rejoiceth: 9
But the lamp of the wicked shall be put out.

[a] Or, *causeth shame and bringeth reproach*
[b] Heb. *uprightness of way.* [c] Heb. *sin.* [d] Or, *feigneth*
[e] Or, *rebuke*

---

is probably as nearly correct as can be obtained, viz. 'the desire of the treacherous is violence,' though the antithesis is not very obvious.

3. The special reference of the verse may be to the danger of rash speech under the despotic government of Persia and Greece.

4. Bunyan makes Christian apply the words of the first clause to the case of Ignorance.

5. is loathsome. The two verbs in this clause should rather be translated as actives, viz. 'acts in a loathsome and shameful manner.'

7. maketh himself rich. Undoubtedly the proper meaning is 'feigneth himself to be rich' (cf. xii. 9 and note).

8. threatening. Literally 'rebuke'; but, so translated, the second clause has no connexion with the first, nor does any of the ingenuity of commentators serve to effect a connexion. We must either suppose, therefore, that the original has been corrupted, that the verse originally read something like xiv. 20, or that two unrelated clauses have here been brought into contact.

9. rejoiceth. Perhaps 'shineth brightly' better expresses the meaning. 'Light and lamp' are synonyms here, and it is over-fanciful to suppose that each word is more appropriate to its context. Cf. xxiv. 20.

10 By pride cometh only contention:
But with the well advised is wisdom.
11 Wealth gotten [a] by vanity shall be diminished:
But he that gathereth [b] by labour shall have increase.
12 Hope deferred maketh the heart sick:
But when the desire cometh, it is a tree of life.
13 Whoso despiseth [c] the word [d] bringeth destruction on himself:
But he that feareth the commandment shall be rewarded.
14 The [e] law of the wise is a fountain of life,
To depart from the snares of death.
15 Good understanding [f] giveth favour:
But the way of the treacherous is rugged.

[a] The Sept. and Vulg. have, *in haste.* [b] Heb. *with the hand.*
[c] See ch. xvi. 20. [d] Or, *maketh himself a debtor thereto*
[e] Or, *teaching* [f] Or, *getteth*

---

10. well advised. 'Those who willingly accept counsel' gives an excellent meaning, but a slight alteration of the Hebrew permits us to read 'humble' (cf. xi. 2).

11. by vanity. This hardly gives the correct idea of the Hebrew, which really means 'from nothing,' and this in itself might be commendable. It seems, therefore, as if the versions were right in translating 'in haste,' with which rendering of the proverb we may compare the common English one 'Light come, light go.'

by labour. Literally, 'with the hand,' which probably signifies 'gradually,' and again reminds us of the wise motto which applies not only to wealth, but to other matters *Festina Lente*, 'hasten slowly.'

13. bringeth destruction. Literally, 'has been forced to give a pledge.' The metaphor is taken from the practice of the debtor giving his creditor some article in pledge, which, were the debt not paid, became the creditor's possession.

15. giveth. Rather, according to the margin, 'getteth.'

rugged. The word so rendered is literally 'permanent,' and is used with that meaning in many parts of the O. T. This and other interpretations of it are speculative. The well-known translation of the A. V. has, of course, understood the word as metaphorical, and Bunyan quotes it in that sense in the conversation between Christiana and Greatheart at the foot of the hill Difficulty. We are bound to confess that it is impossible

Every prudent man worketh with knowledge: 16
But a fool spreadeth out folly.
A wicked messenger falleth into evil: 17
But a faithful ambassador is health.
Poverty and shame *shall be to* him that refuseth [a] correction: 18
But he that regardeth reproof shall be honoured.
The desire accomplished is sweet to the soul: 19
But it is an abomination to fools to depart from evil.
[b] Walk with wise men, and thou shalt be wise: 20
But the companion of fools shall [c] smart for it.
Evil pursueth sinners: 21
But the righteous shall be recompensed with good.
A good man leaveth an inheritance to his children's 22
children;

[a] Or, *instruction*

[b] According to another reading, *He that walketh with wise men shall be wise.*

[c] Heb. *be broken.*

---

to make intelligible the present text, and perhaps the LXX, when it translates 'is in destruction,' points to the true solution. Originally the text may have read, as in Ecclus. xli. 10, 'the way of the treacherous is unto perdition.'

16. spreadeth out, that is, 'makes a display of.'

17. A wicked messenger. Very slight alteration of the Hebrew gives the almost certainly correct meaning 'an incompetent messenger bringeth those who send him into evil.'

19. For the first part of this verse compare the second half of verse 12 above, and for the second part xxix. 27. It is possible that we have once more a fortuitous combination of clauses not originally connected. The LXX and other versions have here quite a different form, but whether they represent the original text or not we cannot determine. They read 'The desires of the righteous gladden the soul, but deeds of the unrighteous are far from knowledge.'

22. Cf. Eccles. ii. 26.

23. The Hebrew of this verse seems to be so corrupt that there is no satisfactory meaning to be obtained from it. The ancient versions all vary in their rendering, showing that the difficulty must have been felt very early. The LXX, for instance, renders 'the righteous shall pass many years in wealth, but the unrighteous

And the wealth of the sinner is laid up for the righteous.
23 Much food *is in* the [a] tillage of the poor:
But there is that is destroyed by reason of injustice.
24 He that spareth his rod hateth his son:
But he that loveth him chasteneth him [b] betimes.
25 The righteous eateth to the satisfying of his soul:
But the belly of the wicked shall want.
14 Every wise woman buildeth her house:
But [c] the foolish plucketh it down with her own hands.
2 He that walketh in his uprightness feareth the LORD:
But he that is perverse in his ways despiseth him.
3 In the mouth of the foolish is a [d] rod [e] of pride:

[a] Or, *tilled land* [b] Or, *diligently* [c] Heb. *folly.*
[d] Or, *shoot* [e] Or, *for* his *pride*

---

shall be speedily destroyed,' which, of course, makes excellent sense, but is not to be obtained from the present Hebrew. Neither do modern emendations much commend themselves, and the wisest course is to confess ourselves beaten.

24. betimes. There is nothing in the original corresponding with this (see note on viii. 27).

xiv. **1. Every wise woman.** The difficulty of this verse consists in the fact that as the Hebrew now stands a concrete expression occurs in the first clause, and an abstract one in the second, viz. 'wise women and folly,' so that editors change one or other of these to balance the corresponding one; the ancient versions read 'foolish women' in the second clause. Some consider that the place here assigned to the wife is more important than that elsewhere indicated in the O. T., but it does not seem to surpass the position assigned to her in chap. xxxi. Of course, 'builds her house' would then mean 'manages her household.' A more radical suggestion is that which treats the text as analogous to ix. 1, and omits 'among women' in the first clause, and 'with her hands' in the second, and so translates the whole verse, 'Wisdom builds her house, but folly plucks it down.' The objection to this is that these two virtues are never found personified in this section of the book.

3. rod of pride. The word rendered 'rod' is only found again in Isa. xi. 1, where it means 'a shoot,' and the obvious metaphor is that of a fresh shoot springing from an old stem, i. e. the words of the foolish are the outcome of their self-conceit. If

But the lips of the wise shall preserve them.
Where no oxen are, the crib is clean: 4
But much increase is by the strength of the ox.
A faithful witness will not lie: 5
But a false witness [a] uttereth lies.
A scorner seeketh wisdom, and *findeth it* not: 6
But knowledge is easy unto him that hath understanding.
[b] Go into the presence of a foolish man, 7
And thou shalt not perceive *in him* the lips of knowledge.

[a] Heb. *breatheth out.* [b] Or, *Go from... for thou wilt not &c.*

---

in the second clause we omit 'them,' the two clauses give us a balanced statement of the respective effects of foolish and wise speech. Many versions and editors read 'rod for pride.' The metaphor would then point to the punishment inflicted upon himself or others by the speech of the fool, but this meaning is not so likely.

4. clean. This is the word translated in Song of Songs vi. 9, 'undefiled.' Elsewhere it is always used of moral purity. The difficulty with the word here is that the cleanness of the stall has nothing much to do with the point of the proverb, unless it signifies that to be over fastidious about cleanliness is foolish, when much more important matters are at stake. In Scotland there is an interesting variant—'It 's clean about the wren's nest when there is nought within.' A very excellent reading is gained by a slight alteration of the Hebrew, viz. 'Where there are no oxen there is no corn.' For an interesting development of the thought suggested by the ordinary reading, see the poem on this text in Walter C. Smith's *Thoughts and Fancies for Sunday Evenings*, beginning

> 'Were there no oxen feeding in the stall,
> The crib were clean:
> But without oxen harvest would be small,
> Housekeeping lean:
> Wherefore, we may not be too prim and nice;
> There is no good that doth not cost a price.'

6. scorner. This man cannot find wisdom because he has not the true spirit of the seeker.

7. Go into the presence. The thought of this verse seems to be very much the same as that of xv. 7, viz. that from a foolish man no wisdom is to be learned; but the exact significance of the Hebrew is very difficult to discover, and Frankenberg gives up in despair the attempt to translate it.

8 The wisdom of the prudent is to understand his way:
But the folly of fools is deceit.
9 [a] The foolish make a mock at [b] guilt:
But among the upright there is [c] good will.
10 The heart knoweth its own bitterness;
And a stranger doth not intermeddle with its joy.
11 The house of the wicked shall be overthrown:
But the tent of the upright shall flourish.
12 There is a way which [d] seemeth right unto a man,
But the end thereof are the ways of death.

[a] Or, *Guilt mocketh at the foolish*
[b] Or, *the guilt offering*
[c] Or, *the favour* of God
[d] Or, *is straight before*

---

8. deceit. If this word could mean 'self-deception,' as some translators take it, the thought of the proverb would be quite clear, but from the usage of the word elsewhere it seems as if it always signified deception practised on others, and perhaps there may have been some slight variation of the original, for the LXX renders 'the folly of fools leads them astray,' exactly the meaning that the clause demands.

9. guilt. The word thus rendered is the technical term for the 'trespass-offering,' and its use here is difficult to understand. Some have inverted it and supposed that the offering itself is personified and imagined to be mocking the offerer, but this is far-fetched and unnatural. The word may mean 'guilt,' but it cannot mean 'sin,' which would be the proper word to use were the idea that of the foolish laughing at evil. There is probably some original corruption of the text that it is not now possible to discover.

10. The thought of this verse is common to many peoples, as Malan's illustrations prove. Perowne quotes appropriately Keble's lines:—

> 'Each in his hidden sphere of joy or woe
> Our hermit spirits dwell and range apart.'

While we may remember also the words of Burns:—

> 'What 's done they partly may compute,
> But know not what 's resisted.'

The LXX translates the second line, 'And when he rejoices he has no fellowship with pride'—obviously meaning that the chastening effect of sorrow abides with a man even in days of success; but the rendering must represent a different original.

Even in laughter the heart is sorrowful ; 13
And the end of mirth is heaviness.
The backslider in heart shall be filled with his own ways : 14
And a good man *shall be satisfied* from himself.
The simple believeth every word : 15
But the prudent man looketh well to his going.
A wise man feareth, and departeth from evil : 16
But the fool beareth himself insolently, and is confident.
He that is soon angry will deal foolishly : 17
And a man of wicked devices is hated.
The simple inherit folly : 18
But the prudent are crowned with knowledge.
The evil bow before the good ; 19
And the wicked at the gates of the righteous.
The poor is hated even of his own neighbour : 20
But the rich hath many friends.
He that despiseth his neighbour sinneth : 21
But he that hath pity on the poor, happy is he.

---

13. is sorrowful. It is not certain that the statement is so definitely pessimistic. The rendering 'may be' in place of 'is' is allowable.

14. backslider. This translation does not give the correct significance of the Hebrew, which is simply that of a man who turns aside, not of one who deserts a path he has formerly been following (cf. i. 32, and note).

from himself. Rather, 'from what he does.'

15. Cf. the common proverb, 'Look before you leap.'

17. a man of wicked devices. As the Hebrew stands the proverb consists of statements about two different forms of evil, not in itself an impossible form, but certainly not the most common one; and by the alteration of one letter we can arrive at a text which the LXX read, and translate 'a wise man endures,' which makes a perfect contrast, and is probably the correct form.

18. inherit is too strong a word. 'Acquire' is better.

are crowned with. The meaning of the original word is uncertain. From other Semitic analogies it is supposed to mean 'crown,' but the evidence is not satisfactory. Probably we should understand 'acquire,' as in the former clause.

22 [a] Do they not err that devise evil?
But mercy and truth *shall be to* them that devise good.
23 In all labour there is profit:
But the talk of the lips *tendeth* only to penury.
24 [b] The crown of the wise is their riches:
But the folly of fools is *only* folly.
25 A true witness delivereth souls:
But he that [c] uttereth lies *causeth* deceit.
26 In the fear of the LORD is strong confidence:
And [d] his children shall have a place of refuge.
27 The fear of the LORD is a fountain of life,
To depart from the snares of death.
28 In the multitude of people is the king's glory:
But in the want of people is the destruction of the prince.
29 He that is slow to anger is of great understanding:
But he that is hasty of spirit [e] exalteth folly.
30 A [f] sound heart is the life of the flesh:
But [g] envy is the rottenness of the bones.
31 He that oppresseth the poor reproacheth his Maker:
But he that hath mercy on the needy honoureth him.

[a] Or, *Shall they not go astray*
[b] Or, *Their riches is a crown unto the wise*
[c] Heb. *breatheth out.* [d] Or, *the children of him* that hath it
[e] Or, *carrieth away* [f] Or, *tranquil* [g] Or, *jealousy*

---

24. riches. A slight change of the Hebrew, following the LXX, gives the proverb a better form, 'the crown of the wise is their wisdom; the crown of fools is their folly.'

25. souls. As frequently, 'lives.'

causeth deceit. A slight change gives the better meaning 'destroys.'

26. In the fear. Better, in order to preserve the form of the couplet, to translate 'he who fears the Lord has.'

29. exalteth. Better, 'increases.'

30. A sound heart. Better, 'tranquil mind.'

31. Maker. This is a name for God confined to the later literature of Judaism.

The wicked is thrust down in his [a] evil-doing : 32
But the righteous [b] hath hope in his death.
Wisdom resteth in the heart of him that hath understanding : 33
[c] But *that which is* in the inward part of fools is made known.
Righteousness exalteth a nation : 34
But sin is a reproach to [d] any people.
The king's favour is toward a servant that dealeth wisely : 35
But his wrath shall be *against* him that [e] causeth shame.
A soft answer turneth away wrath : **15**
But a grievous word stirreth up anger.
The tongue of the wise uttereth knowledge aright : 2
But the mouth of fools poureth out folly.

---

[a] Or, *calamity*
[b] Or, *hath a refuge*
[c] Or, *And in the midst of fools it maketh itself known*
[d] Heb. *peoples.*
[e] Or, *doeth shamefully*

---

32. evil-doing. This follows the LXX, while the rendering of the margin, 'calamity,' is that of the Hebrew.

hath hope in his death. This, which accurately represents the Hebrew text, stands alone in Proverbs as expressing a hope in immortality. It is, therefore, not probable on that score alone, and, further, because it does not make a good contrast with the previous clause. The LXX, therefore, seems to represent the best text here, and we should translate in accordance with it, 'But the righteous hath a refuge in his integrity.'

33. But that which. As the form of the text shows, this rendering is uncertain, and neither in origin nor result very justifiable. The simplest way to make the clause intelligible is to change the word rendered 'is known' to that for 'folly,' which involves a very slight alteration of the Hebrew, and then render 'but folly resteth in the mind of fools.'

XV. **1.** Malan quotes many parallels to this well-known proverb, which seems to be a common inheritance of all peoples, and we need only quote one Buddhist form of it here: 'Anger is not appeased by anger, it is appeased by meekness ; and this is an eternal law.'

3. Frankenberg suggests, with great probability, that this saying is directed against the epicurean theory so well known

3 The eyes of the LORD are in every place,
Keeping watch upon the evil and the good.
4 [a] A wholesome tongue is a tree of life:
But perverseness therein is a breaking of the spirit.
5 A fool despiseth his father's [b] correction:
But he that regardeth reproof [c] getteth prudence.
6 In the house of the righteous is much treasure:
But in the revenues of the wicked is trouble.
7 The lips of the wise disperse knowledge:
But the heart of the foolish [d] *doeth* not so.
8 The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the LORD:
But the prayer of the upright is his delight.
9 The way of the wicked is an abomination to the LORD:
But he loveth him that followeth after righteousness.
10 There is grievous correction for him that forsaketh the way:
And he that hateth reproof shall die.
11 [e] Sheol and [f] Abaddon are before the LORD:

[a] Heb. *The healing of the tongue.* [b] Or, *instruction*
[c] Or, *dealeth prudently* [d] Or, is *not stedfast* or *right*
[e] Or, *The grave* [f] Or, *Destruction*

---

from the poem of Lucretius, that the Divine power was indifferent to all human action.

4. perverseness. More accurately, 'violence.' For some unaccountable reason, the Latin is the only one of the ancient versions which has caught the proper sense of the second clause.

6. trouble. It is better to read here with the LXX 'the revenues of the wicked are destroyed.'

7. disperse. The alteration of one word gives another very appropriate rendering, 'preserve'; but the former is quite admissible, though elsewhere used only of dispersing evil influences.

doeth not so. A slight change in the text gives the much better meaning 'does not understand.'

8, 9. These two beautiful verses have many parallels in the prophets, and it is always interesting to trace connexions between the latter and the writers of the Wisdom literature. See 1 Sam. xv. 22; Isa. i. 11, &c.

11. Sheol and Abaddon. Here and in xxvii. 20, as elsewhere in the Wisdom literature, these two proper names are combined

How much more then the hearts of the children of men!
A scorner loveth not to be reproved: 12
He will not go unto the wise.
A merry heart maketh a cheerful countenance: 13
But by sorrow of heart the spirit is broken.
The heart of him that hath understanding seeketh 14
knowledge:
But the mouth of fools feedeth on folly.
All the days of the afflicted are evil: 15
But he that is of a cheerful heart *hath* a continual feast.
Better is little with the fear of the LORD, 16
Than great treasure and trouble therewith.
Better is a [a] dinner of herbs where love is, 17
Than a stalled ox and hatred therewith.
A wrathful man stirreth up contention: 18
But he that is slow to anger appeaseth strife.

[a] Or, *portion*

---

apparently as synonymous terms for the region of death. In later times (see Rev. ix. 11) Abaddon had become personified into an angel of death. According to the Wisdom literature Jahweh is represented as exercising control over Sheol, a view that is an advance upon earlier ideas. (See Isa. xxxviii. 18.)

13. A merry heart. For the teaching of Proverbs on this subject see verse 15 and xvii. 22, as also Ecclus. xiii. 26. One wonders whether R. L. Stevenson learned his lessons of joy from these verses, and whether it is the memory of Proverbs that underlies the many beautiful petitions in his wonderful prayers—e. g. 'Give us courage and gaiety, and a quiet mind . . . give us to go blithely on our business all this day . . . give us to awake with smiles, give us to labour smiling. . . renew in us the sense of joy.' See Dunbar's poems *Of Content* and *Best to be Blythe.*

16. 'Mickle corn, mickle care,' says the Scottish proverb.

17. dinner. Better, 'dish.'

stalled ox. That is, a fatted ox, the fuller English expression being 'a stall-fed ox.' It is to be taken here as symbolic of luxurious feeding. Cf. the Scottish proverb 'Welcome! is the best dish in the kitchen.'

18. See xiv. 29, xv. 1; Ecclus. viii. 16, xxviii. 8-12.

19 The way of the sluggard is as an hedge of thorns:
But the path of the upright is made an high way.
20 A wise son maketh a glad father:
But a foolish man despiseth his mother.
21 Folly is joy to him that is void of [a] wisdom:
But a man of understanding maketh straight his going.
22 Where there is no counsel, purposes are disappointed:
But in the multitude of counsellors they are established.
23 A man hath joy in the answer of his mouth:
And a word in due season, how good is it!
24 To the wise the way of life *goeth* upward,
That he may depart from [b] Sheol beneath.
25 The LORD will root up the house of the proud:
But he will establish the border of the widow.
26 Evil devices are an abomination to the LORD:
But [c] pleasant words *are* pure.

[a] Heb. *heart.* [b] Or, *the grave*
[c] Or, *the pure* speak *pleasant words*

---

19. an hedge of should rather be 'hedged with.' Cf. Hosea ii. 6. Bunyan makes a fine use of the figure in the passage already referred to at xiii. 15 (see note there).

20. Cf. x. 1, of which the second clause here is a variant.

21. This verse may have suggested to Paul the warning contained in Eph. v. 15.

24. upward. This is used in contrast simply to the 'beneath' of the following clause, and has no reference to immortality, for, of course, both good and evil men ended in Sheol, but the wise man avoided a precipitate journey thither.

25. For the meaning of 'border' see Deut. xix. 14. The Jewish law took great care to preserve inviolate each man's possession in land; see xxii. 28.

widow stands here obviously as the most typical instance of those who required protection (cf. Luke xx. 47).

26. pleasant words. This clause as it stands does not afford an appropriate contrast to the first clause, neither does that of the LXX, based on different Hebrew, 'The sayings of the pure are held in honour.' Some suggest an alteration that will give the meaning 'pleasant words are well-pleasing to Him.' It appears

He that is greedy of gain troubleth his own house: 27
But he that hateth gifts shall live.
The heart of the righteous studieth to answer: 28
But the mouth of the wicked poureth out evil things.
The LORD is far from the wicked: 29
But he heareth the prayer of the righteous.
The light of the eyes rejoiceth the heart: 30
And good tidings make the bones fat.
The ear that hearkeneth to the reproof of life 31
Shall abide among the wise.
He that refuseth [a] correction despiseth his own soul: 32
But he that hearkeneth to reproof getteth [b] understanding.

---

[a] Or, *instruction* [b] Heb. *heart.*

---

that the original form of the second clause has been lost, and that all that we have are attempts to supply its place.

27. troubleth. The word is hardly strong enough to represent the original, which is better rendered 'destroyeth.' Plumptre notes that the Aramaic paraphrase of this verse reads 'He who gathers the mammon of unrighteousness,' and wonders whether it was this verse that suggested the saying in Luke xvi. 9.

gifts. This no doubt signifies bribes. Bribery has always been, and still remains, one of the greatest scandals and difficulties in Oriental government.

From this point onwards to the tenth verse of the next chapter the order of the verses in the LXX varies from that of the Hebrew, there being probably some attempt to rearrange according to the connexion of ideas.

28. studieth to answer. The LXX, which reads the plural, translates 'meditate faithfulness,' an excellent meaning that may be correct.

30. The light of the eyes. Under the influence of the second clause many interpreters confine this to the light of joy shining in the eyes of the messenger of good tidings, while others generalize it as a symbolical expression for their good fortune. That may simply be a statement that as light is a joy to the eyes (cf. Eccles. xi. 7) so are good tidings the means of giving gladness to him who hears them.

31. This verse is well paraphrased by Toy, 'Teachableness is the key that unlocks the door of the sages.'

32. his own soul. That is, 'himself.'

33 The fear of the LORD is the instruction of wisdom;
And before honour *goeth* humility.

16 The [a] preparations of the heart belong to man:
But the answer of the tongue is from the LORD.

2 All the ways of a man are clean in his own eyes:
But the LORD weigheth the spirits.

3 [b] Commit thy works unto the LORD,
And thy [c] thoughts shall be established.

4 The LORD hath made every thing for [d] its own end:
Yea, even the wicked for the day of evil.

[a] Or, *plans* [b] Heb. *Roll.* [c] Or, *purposes*
[d] Or, *his own purpose*

---

33. Cf. i. 7 and ix. 10, of which verses this is a significant variant. Perhaps 'instruction in wisdom' gives the meaning better. For the second clause cf. xviii. 12, xxii. 4.

xvi. **1.** On the first seven verses of this chapter Plumptre remarks that, 'more than any other group in the book, they have a specially religious character impressed upon them.' The frequent repetition of the name Jahweh in these verses is remarkable.

preparations. As the margin shows, this is better rendered 'plans,' while the contrasted phrase in the next clause, 'answer of the tongue,' seems to mean the final outcome of thought, possibly, as has been suggested, with an allusion to defending oneself before kings. Is it possible that this verse was in our Lord's mind when He told His disciples that they were not to be anxious in the hour of trial, for the words were not their own in such an hour, but it would be the Spirit of their Father that would speak in them (cf. Matt. x. 20, Luke xii. 12)? Cf. the ninth verse of this chapter for a similar idea, differently expressed.

2. This verse recurs in almost identical form in xxi. 2.

3. Commit. As the margin shows, the Hebrew metaphor is that of rolling a burden upon the shoulders of some one else, a metaphor that is fairly frequent in the Hebrew poets. Cf. Ps. xxxvii. 5. These first three verses are not found in the LXX.

4. its own end. As the margin suggests, it is possible to render also 'his own end' or 'purpose,' but the reading of the text is probably correct, judging from the parallel clause. The thought that underlies the verse is that of God's absolute control of the universe, and that nothing can possibly happen without His controlling purpose guiding the action. Even the wicked have their place to fill in the universe, and, according to the somewhat

Every one that is proud in heart is an abomination to 5
the LORD :
[a] *Though* hand *join* in hand, he shall not be unpunished.
By mercy and truth iniquity is [b] purged : 6
And by the fear of the LORD men depart from evil.
When a man's ways please the LORD, 7
He maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him.

---

[a] See ch. xi. 21. [b] Or, *atoned for*

simple philosophy of this writer, they are made for the day of evil, but he does not suggest the problem as to why such a thing should be, or what is the purpose of their destruction. That evil men existed everywhere, wrought mischief, and suffered punishment, was so obvious a truth that the O. T. writers continually note it, but they did not get lost in a metaphysical bog as to free-will and determinism, seeing that it was always possible for a man to change either from good or evil to its opposite. Beyond the statement, therefore, that all reward and punishment lie ultimately in the hands of God the language of this verse does not go.

5. Cf. for the clauses of this verse xi. 20, 21 and the note on the latter verse. Between this verse and the next two verses are found in the LXX, which run as follows:

'The beginning of a good way is to do justly,
And it is more acceptable with God than to offer sacrifices.
He who seeks the Lord will find knowledge with righteousness,
And they who rightly seek Him will find peace.'

As will be noticed, parallels are to be found to these verses in verse 6 of this chapter, xxviii. 5, 1 Sam. xv. 22, Eccles. v. 1. These verses in the LXX may preserve current Hebrew proverbs that have dropped out of our present Hebrew text (see Toy).

6. The first clause of this verse represents the highest level of Hebrew thought on the subject of moral purification, and is paralleled by such famous utterances as that found in Hos. vi. 6. It may represent the more philosophical attitude of the Wisdom writers in contrast with that of the priestly class ; not perhaps that the two were so much in conflict as that they looked at the whole question of expiation from different points of view.

7. Wildeboer thinks that the writer has in mind such stories as those of Abraham and Abimelech, Jacob and Laban, and the conduct of David to his enemies recorded in 2 Sam. xix. 11-15. Whether this be so or not, we can at least illustrate this verse from such instances.

8 Better is a little with righteousness
Than great revenues with injustice.
9 A man's heart deviseth his way:
But the LORD directeth his steps.
10 [a]A divine sentence is in the lips of the king:
His mouth shall not transgress in judgement.
11 A just balance and scales are the LORD'S:
All the weights of the bag are his work.
12 It is an abomination to kings to commit wickedness:
For the throne is established by righteousness.
13 Righteous lips are the delight of kings;
And they love him that speaketh right.
14 The wrath of a king is *as* messengers of death:
But a wise man will pacify it.
15 In the light of the king's countenance is life;
And his favour is as a cloud of the latter rain.

[a] Heb. *Divination.*

---

8. This is the only verse among the first nine that does not contain the name Jahweh. For the idea contained in it cf. xv. 16.

9. Cf. verse 1 above, and note.

10. From this to the end of verse 15 the Proverbs deal with the conduct of kings.

It is obvious that the statements made in this verse can only refer to the ideal king, and that they could not be spoken of kings in general.

11. Cf. ii. 1 and note, and also Amos viii. 5.

are the LORD'S. Grätz suggests the emendation 'the king's,' and this is quite possible, as some one may have supposed the term to refer to the Divine King, and so altered it. The emended text would bring the verse into more exact accordance with the passage. The translation here 'a just balance and scales' is inadmissible, as the adjective really only goes with the second word. There seems no reason why the scales rather than the balance should be called just, and Toy suggests that the adjective should be omitted altogether.

12. Cf. xxv. 5, xxix. 14 for parallel proverbs.

14. Cf. Eccles. viii. 4. 'Will pacify it,' i. e. 'will seek to pacify it,' as being the course of true prudence.

15. For the figures here employed cf. 2 Sam. xxiii. 3, 4.

How much better is it to get wisdom than gold! 16
Yea, to get understanding is rather to be chosen than silver.
The high way of the upright is to depart from evil: 17
He that keepeth his way preserveth his soul.
Pride *goeth* before destruction, 18
And an haughty spirit before a fall.
Better it is to be of a lowly spirit with the [a] poor, 19
Than to divide the spoil with the proud.
He that [b] giveth heed unto [c] the word shall find good: 20

[a] Or, *meek*
[b] Or, *handleth a matter wisely*
[c] See ch. xiii. 13.

Ps. lxv. 10, and Ps. lxxii. 6, as also an Indian proverb quoted by Malan: 'The king's countenance is like the sun, it warms both eyes and hearts.'

the latter rain. That is, the spring rain, which was essential to the proper ripening of the crops (see S. of S. ii. 11 and note, also Job xxix. 23).

16. Cf. iii. 14 and note.

17. is to depart, i.e. 'consists in departing from,' but more probably the translation should be 'avoids.' The LXX somewhat expands this verse, but there is nothing original in the expansion. It simply consists of echoes of other verses of Proverbs, and is probably due to a scribe.

18. In many places in the Proverbs pride is spoken of (cf. xi. 2, xviii. 12, &c.); while the form of a proverb may be derived from the experiences of social life, the thought cuts much deeper (cf. the English form of the proverb 'Pride will have a fall,' and the Scottish 'Pride's an ill horse to ride'). Malan also quotes in illustration one of the seven sages, 'What is Zeus about? He humbles the proud, and raises the humble,' and also a Welsh proverb, 'Too full runs over, and too high falls down.' Cf. further the words of the *Magnificat*, Luke i. 51, 52, as also Job v. 11, 1 Sam. ii. 7, which probably lie behind the *Magnificat*.

19. divide the spoil. The metaphor may either be a military one or refer to the unjust conduct of unscrupulous judges and governors.

20. giveth heed unto, i.e. acts wisely with regard to. Hence arise the translation of the margin and the A. V., since the Hebrew equivalent for 'word' frequently means 'matter'; but the translation of the text is undoubtedly correct. It is not certain that 'word' here implies the Divine word; it may very well refer to the writings of the sages. Wildeboer sees in it a proof that

And whoso trusteth in the LORD, happy is he.
21 The wise in heart shall be called prudent:
And the sweetness of the lips increaseth learning.
22 Understanding is a wellspring of life unto him that hath it:
But the correction of fools is *their* folly.
23 The heart of the wise instructeth his mouth,
And addeth learning to his lips.
24 Pleasant words are *as* an honeycomb,
Sweet to the soul, and health to the bones.
25 [a] There is a way which [b] seemeth right unto a man,
But the end thereof are the ways of death.
26 The appetite of the labouring man laboureth for him;
For his mouth [c] craveth it of him.
27 A worthless man [d] deviseth mischief:
And in his lips there is as a scorching fire.
28 A froward man scattereth abroad strife:
And a whisperer [e] separateth chief friends.

[a] See ch. xiv. 12.
[b] Or, *is straight before*
[c] Or, *urgeth him* thereto
[d] Heb. *diggeth.*
[e] Or, *alienateth his friend*

Israel had already become 'the nation of the book,' as the Mohammedans term them, and he considers that the reference here is not only to the law, but also to the prophets.

21. shall be called. That is, 'esteemed.'

learning should perhaps rather be 'powers of persuasion,' which gives in every way a better sense.

22. For the ideas of this verse cf. x. 11, i. 2, &c.

23. This is a varying form of verse 21.

24. On the honeycomb see Song of Songs v. 1, Ps. xix. 10. Some think that the medicinal uses of honey are here referred to, but it is improbable.

25. A repetition of xiv. 12.

26. Cf. Eccles. vi. 7.

craveth it of him. The marginal rendering is better, 'urgeth him thereto,' that is, 'drives him to work.'

27. A worthless man. See vi. 12.

deviseth is literally 'digs,' viz. a pit to serve as a trap.

28. chief. This word is an interpretative addition. The idea

A man of violence enticeth his neighbour, 29
And leadeth him in a way that is not good.
[a]He that shutteth his eyes, *it is* to devise froward things: 30
He that compresseth his lips bringeth evil to pass
The hoary head is a crown of [b]glory, 31
[c]It shall be found in the way of righteousness.
He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; 32
And he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city
The lot is cast into the lap; 33

[a] Or, *He that shutteth his eyes to devise froward things, that compresseth his lips, bringeth &c.*

[b] Or, *beauty*

[c] Or, If *it be found*

---

of the text is almost certainly the correct one, and not the marginal rendering 'alienateth his friend.'

30. Cf. vi. 13, 14. The translation of the text seems the best, and the general sense is, as Toy says, clear enough, though there is some doubt about the exact rendering of the Hebrew. The signs here given, we learn from the earlier passage, were recognized as symbols of treacherous conduct.

31. The hoary head. Here is beautifully expressed an idea that was common in the O. T., and which we find also in a proverb of the Rabbis, 'To welcome an old man is like welcoming the Shekinah.' The suggested rendering of the margin that the hoary head is only honourable if found in the way of righteousness is hardly sustained by the Hebrew, though there is a beautiful expression of it in Ecclus. xxv. 3-6.

32. This famous verse has a great many parallels in the literature of many people (cf. Malan, vol. ii, pp. 432-42). The Jewish fathers cited this text as the definition of the perfect hero, and English readers may remember the passage in Milton's *Paradise Regained*, book ii, lines 466 ff. :—

'Yet he who reigns within himself, and rules
Passions, desires, and fears, is more a king—
Which every wise and virtuous man attains.'

Cf. also the less-known but very fine poem of Dunbar, *Rewl of Anis Self*, with its recurring refrain, evidently suggested by this verse :—

'He rewlis weill, that weill him self can gyd.'

33. lot. This method of discovering the Divine will was a common one among ancient peoples, and is referred to frequently

But the whole disposing thereof is of the LORD.
17 Better is a dry morsel and quietness therewith,
Than an house full of [a] feasting with strife.
2 A servant that dealeth wisely shall have rule over a son
that [b] causeth shame,
And shall have part in the inheritance among the brethren.
3 The fining pot is for silver, and the furnace for gold:
But the LORD trieth the hearts.
4 An evil-doer giveth heed to wicked lips;

[a] Heb. *the sacrifices of strife.*

[b] Or, *doeth shamefully*

---

in the O. T., where it seems to have been employed even by the priests, though the methods of its employment are not clear. Some of the most notable uses were as follows: (1) to discover a criminal (see Jonah i. 7); to appoint to high office (1 Sam. x. 20); to divide property (Matt. xxvii. 35). See the article 'Lots' in *HBD.*

lap. Cf. vi. 27. The reference is undoubtedly to the pouch formed by doubling the outer garment over the girdle in which things were kept and carried. Cf. xvii. 23, xxi. 14.

disposing. The result of this method of divination was regarded as expressive of the Divine will.

xvii. **1. a dry morsel.** Cf. the Italian proverb, 'An apple eaten in peace is worth more than a partridge eaten in trouble.'

feasting. This is literally 'sacrifices,' but, as we have seen several times already, in ordinary practice the two things were synonymous, since the eating of the flesh offered in sacrifice involved a feast. It is further possible that by this time the word had no longer its strict ritual significance, but designated simply the slaying of animals for food.

2. servant. This is, of course, a slave, and we have many traces in the O.T., not only of the practice of regarding such as members of the family (cf. Gen. xxiv. 12; Deut. v. 14), but also of the slave becoming heir to the master (cf. Gen. xv. 3; 1 Kings xi. 26). As to the uncertainty of inheritance caused by foolish or wicked sons, cf. Eccles. ii. 21, x. 7, and for the general idea of this verse cf. Ecclus. x. 25.

3. The first clause of this verse is repeated in xxvii. 21, and the figure occurs in various other places in Scripture (cf. Ps. lxvi. 10-12; Mal. iii. 3; Ecclus. ii. 5).

And [a] a liar giveth ear to a mischievous tongue.
Whoso mocketh the poor reproacheth his Maker : 5
And he that is glad at calamity shall not be unpunished.
Children's children are the crown of old men ; 6
And the glory of children are their fathers.
[b] Excellent speech becometh not a fool : 7
Much less do lying lips a prince.

[a] Heb. *falsehood.* [b] Or, *Arrogant*

---

4. liar. As the margin shows, this really means 'falsehood'; but probably the text is corrupt, as the form of the verse certainly requires not the abstract but the concrete noun, and the two clauses are designed to show how readily the wicked man listens to mischievous gossip. In many LXX manuscripts there is added here a verse which in the best manuscript occurs after verse 6. It runs thus :—

'To the faithful belongs the whole world of wealth,
But to the faithless not an *obolus*' (that is, 'farthing').

The form of this saying is so distinctly Greek that it appears to have had a Greek origin. It may have been, indeed, the production of a Greek scribe.

5. Cf. xiv. 31 for the first clause.

glad at calamity. The only question in the interpretation of this verse is whether the calamity spoken of is to be confined to that which happens to the poor, or is to be understood of calamity in general. Cf. for the general idea of the verse Ecclus. iv. 1-6.

6. crown. This verse expresses in beautiful and memorable language one of the great thoughts of the O.T., that children are one of the greatest of life's blessings, and the two clauses of the verse regard the relationship both from the side of the fathers and of the children. There is no doubt that, as commentators have suggested, the original motives that prompted the desire for children was in order to provide some one who would make due provision for proper religious rites being performed in honour of the dead, since the man who was without such would fare badly in the other world.

7. Excellent. The meaning 'arrogant,' given in the margin, is without any valid support, and there is much to be said for translating the Hebrew by 'honest' rather than 'excellent.' In the second clause the word rendered 'prince' is found again in verse 26, where it is translated 'noble,' and both in that verse and here seems to refer more to character than to social position, so it

8 A gift is *as* a precious stone in the eyes of him that hath it:
Whithersoever [a] it turneth, [a] it [b] prospereth.
9 He that covereth a transgression seeketh love:
But he that harpeth on a matter [c] separateth chief friends.
10 A rebuke entereth deeper into one that hath understanding
Than an hundred stripes into a fool.
11 [d] An evil man seeketh only rebellion;

[a] Or, *he* [b] Or, *dealeth wisely* [c] See ch. xvi. 28.

[d] Or, *A rebellious man* (Heb. *rebellion*) *seeketh only evil*

---

would be better to render it 'a man of noble character.' The whole force of the verse seems to be that speech should be the outward expression of the inward spirit. (Cf. James iii. 11, 12.)

8. gift. This word almost certainly means in the present connexion a bribe. (Cf. Exod. xxiii. 8.)

precious stone. Since there is no authority for introducing 'as' before these words, and without it the mere statement that the gift consists of a jewel has little significance, there is great probability that Frankenberg's suggestion to understand by the word an amulet or lucky stone is the true one.

in the eyes of him that hath it, i. e. in the estimation of the possessor; but the question is whether the possessor is the bribed or the briber. There is much to be said for both, though the latter appears more probable.

it turneth. Instead of 'it' the 'he' of the margin is more likely. The clause could then signify that through virtue of his bribe the briber always accomplishes his purposes—a cynical proverb that throws a lurid light upon the social conditions of the period from which it emanated.

9. covereth, i. e. 'keeps silent about,' the meaning not being that in any guilty way he hides a crime, but that he keeps silent about heedless speeches, that, if reported, might cause heart-burning.

10. Some commentators quote appropriately the Latin proverb 'A noble steed is ruled even by the shadow of the whip; a sluggish one cannot be roused even by the spur.'

11. rebellion. The form of the verse seems to indicate that this proverb deals solely with political conditions, and that the attempt to understand it, either of moral evil or exclusively of rebellion against God, is impossible. If this interpretation is the true one, then the cruel messenger of the second clause must mean the executor of the king's justice, and not, as the LXX supposes, the angel of the Lord.

Therefore a cruel messenger shall be sent against him.
Let a bear robbed of her whelps meet a man, 12
Rather than a fool in his folly.
Whoso rewardeth evil for good, 13
Evil shall not depart from his house.
The beginning of strife is *as* when one letteth out water: 14
Therefore leave off contention, before there be quarrelling.
He that justifieth the wicked, and he that condemneth the 15
righteous,
Both of them alike are an abomination to the LORD.
Wherefore is there a price in the hand of a fool to buy 16
wisdom,
Seeing he hath no [a] understanding?
A friend loveth at all times, 17

[a] Heb. *heart.*

---

12. On the fierceness of the creature here named see 2 Sam. xvii. 8. The LXX has understood and probably read the Hebrew differently, and renders, 'Care may come on a wise man, but fools meditate evil.'

14. letteth out water. The metaphor seems clear enough, just as a slight hole in the bank of a reservoir might lead to the destruction of the whole mass and bring disaster upon the valley beneath, so it is with the first introduction of contention; cf. Ecclus. xxv. 25. But the LXX gives another turn to the phrase, which is also in agreement with many other passages in Proverbs. It renders, 'The outpouring of words is the beginning of strife' (cf. x. 19).

15. There is a kind of alliteration in the Hebrew which Toy well represents by rendering 'he who rights the wrong and he who wrongs the right.'

justifieth. It is from the Hebrew word thus translated that the N.T. took the Greek expression there also rendered 'justify,' but here 'gives judgement on behalf of' conveys a better meaning.

16. a price. It is questionable whether this refers to fees paid in the schools to the teachers of wisdom, or whether it is simply a statement of the impossibility of purchasing wisdom by any sum, however great (cf. Job xxviii. 18; Prov. iii. 15, &c.).

understanding. Here the word expresses capacity, or disposition, for learning.

And [a] a brother is born for adversity.
18 A man void of [b] understanding striketh hands,
And becometh surety in the presence of his neighbour.
19 [c] He loveth transgression that loveth strife:
He that raiseth high his gate seeketh destruction.
20 He that hath a froward heart findeth no good:
And he that hath a perverse tongue falleth into [d] mischief.
21 He that begetteth a fool *doeth it* to his sorrow:
And the father of a fool hath no joy.
22 A merry heart [e] is a good medicine:
But a broken spirit drieth up the bones.

[a] Or, *is born as a brother* [b] Heb. *heart.*
[c] Or, *he that loveth transgression loveth strife* [d] Or, *calamity*
[e] Heb. *causeth good healing.*

---

17. a brother. This probably denotes the natural relationship, but it may be an exact equivalent to 'friend' in the first clause. Elsewhere in the book brothers and friends are contrasted, not in favour of the former (see xviii. 24, xxvii. 10). The rendering of the margin, 'a friend is born as a brother,' is forced and unnecessary, the parallel of the clauses being better preserved by the translation of the text. For a large number of similar sayings see Malan, vol. ii, pp. 472-80.

18. Warnings on this subject are frequent throughout the book; cf. vi. 1-5 and notes.

in the presence of his neighbour, i. e. 'to another,' namely, the creditor.

19. transgression. By a slight alteration of the Hebrew 'destruction' may be read, which gives on the whole a better sense, though, of course, the reading of the text implies that the quarrelsome spirit is itself sinful, and is quite in accordance with the teaching of the book.

raiseth high his gate. In illustration of this phrase commentators cite Jer. xxii. 13-19, and the story of Haman; but it is not quite clear that the phrase ever had the significance thus attributed to it, and the alteration of one letter in the Hebrew gives the meaning 'speaks loftily,' which is better in accordance with the preceding clause, and also with many other passages of Proverbs.

21. Cf Eccles. ii. 18, 19.

22. bones no doubt represent here the whole body (cf. xv. 30, &c.).

A wicked man taketh a gift out of the bosom, 23
To pervert the ways of judgement.
Wisdom is before the face of him that hath understanding: 24
But the eyes of a fool are in the ends of the earth.
A foolish son is a grief to his father, 25
And bitterness to her that bare him.
Also to [a] punish the righteous is not good, 26
Nor to smite the noble for *their* uprightness.
[b] He that spareth his words hath knowledge: 27
And he that is of a cool spirit is a man of understanding.
Even a fool, when he holdeth his peace, is counted wise: 28
[c] When he shutteth his lips, he is *esteemed as* prudent.
He that separateth himself seeketh *his own* desire, **18**

[a] Or, *fine*
[b] Or, *He that hath knowledge spareth his words: and a man of understanding is of a cool spirit*
[c] Or, *He that shutteth his lips is &c.*

---

23. gift. See note on verse 8 above.

bosom. See note on xvi. 33.

24. before the face of, i. e. 'is the goal of.' The wise man has a clear and definite idea of that towards which he is striving, whereas the foolish man dissipates his energies in many unconsidered schemes.

25. Cf. x. 1, xv. 20, and verse 21 above.

26. Also. No satisfactory explanation can be given for this word, and it looks as if this formed the conclusion to some verse that has been lost. Some have tried to account for it by inverting the clauses, but even then there is no need for so emphatic a connective.

not good means 'not seemly.'

for . . . uprightness. This translation is not probable, because it does not fit in well with the preceding clause, though in itself it gives a sufficiently good meaning, as it suggests spiteful conduct. Wildeboer translates 'is not seemly,' as in the previous clause, and this makes excellent sense. On **noble** see note on verse 7 above. It is also possible to translate the clause 'it is not seemly to pervert justice.'

27, 28. For these verses cf. x. 19, and note.

xviii. **1. He that separateth himself,** &c. The text presents

And [a] rageth against all sound wisdom.
2 A fool hath no delight in understanding,
But only that his heart may reveal itself.
3 When the wicked cometh, there cometh also contempt,
And with ignominy *cometh* reproach.
4 The words of a man's mouth are *as* deep waters;
[b] The wellspring of wisdom is *as* a flowing brook.

[a] Or, *quarrelleth with*
[b] Or, *A flowing brook, a wellspring of wisdom*

---

very well the most satisfactory meaning that can be got out of the Hebrew; but it is not easy to give any very clear significance to the words, nor to determine their reference. By many it is taken as descriptive of the selfish scholar who becomes annoyed with everything that interferes with his private pursuits, or of the misanthrope who, like Timon of Athens, becomes all men's enemy. Dr. Horton, taking this significance, draws an interesting parallel with the character of Richard III as delineated by Shakespeare. The Greek represents the man spoken of as being an embittered one who seeks to embitter friends, but there is no satisfactory evidence that this represents a better Hebrew text.

2. This is a rather cynical statement, but a very true result of experience. The foolish man is not only fond of speaking, but inclined to think that his speech is always wise. 'I am Sir Oracle' is his favourite attitude. It is not only egotism, but empty egotism, which marks him out.

3. contempt. Probably of other men for the wicked.

with ignominy. The second clause is difficult, as the translation of the text gives no very clear meaning. Toy alters the Hebrew to read 'on insolence follows scorn,' probably as satisfactory as anything we can get out of it, if conjecture is to be permitted.

4. Here, again, the Hebrew is difficult. As the margin suggests, each of the three metaphorical expressions should probably be taken as descriptive of words, and it is also probable that the LXX, which reads 'life' instead of 'wisdom' in the second clause, is correct, in which case the whole verse would run as follows: 'The words of the wise are deep waters, a flowing brook, a perennial fountain.' In order to make this sense it is necessary to introduce the word 'wise.' This seems necessary, since no such praise as is here given of words in general would be at all likely from Hebrew thinkers.

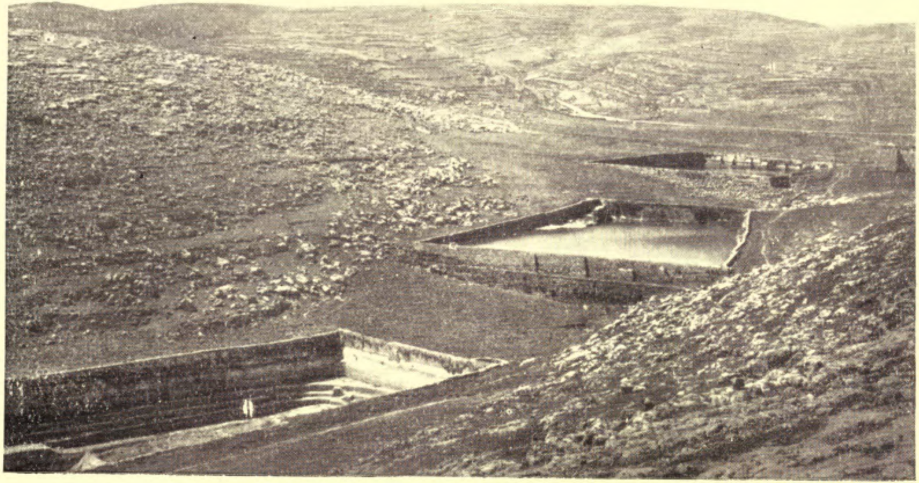


Photo: Photochrom Co.

Solomon's Pools

To accept the person of the wicked is not good, 5
[a] *Nor* to turn aside the righteous in judgement.
A fool's lips [b] enter into contention, 6
And his mouth calleth for stripes.
A fool's mouth is his destruction, 7
And his lips are the snare of his soul.
The words of a whisperer are as dainty morsels, 8
And they go down into the [c] innermost parts of the belly.
He also that is slack in his work 9
Is brother to him that is a destroyer.
The name of the LORD is a strong tower: 10
The righteous runneth into it, and [d] is safe.
The rich man's wealth is his strong city, 11
And as an high wall in his own imagination.

---

[a] Or, *So as to turn aside*
[b] Or, *bring contention*
[c] Heb. *chambers.*
[d] Heb. *is set on high.*

---

5. to turn aside. Better, 'to press.'

6. enter into. Better, 'cause him to enter into.'

calleth for: i. e. 'brings upon him.'

7. snare of his soul: i. e. 'become his own snare.'

8. dainty morsels. The word so translated occurs only here and in the exact parallel, xxvi. 22. This is the probable meaning, but many other interpretations have been given of it, since the word has been derived from different roots (for a full discussion of the Hebrew original see Toy's commentary, p. 359). The second clause of the verse obviously refers to food. The point of the comparison is that just as the delicate eater loves his delicacies, so the man who delights in malicious gossip gloats over it sinking into his heart (cf. Job xx. 12).

10. name. This commonly in the O. T. signifies the person of Yahweh. The expression is not found again in Proverbs (cf. however, xxx. 9).

a strong tower is an image frequent in the Psalter (Ps. lxi. 3).

11. in his own imagination. The Hebrew may also read 'is his riches.' The altered form of the text may have arisen from an attempt on the part of the scribe to lessen the risk of what might appear to him an unlimited praise of riches.

12 Before destruction the heart of man is haughty,
And before honour *goeth* humility.
13 He that giveth answer before he heareth,
It is folly and shame unto him.
14 The spirit of a man will sustain his infirmity;
But a broken spirit who can [a] bear?
15 The heart of the prudent getteth knowledge;
And the ear of the wise seeketh knowledge.
16 A man's gift maketh room for him,
And bringeth him before great men.
17 He that pleadeth his cause first *seemeth* just;
But his neighbour cometh and searcheth him out.
18 The lot causeth contentions to cease,
And parteth between the mighty.
19 A brother [b] offended *is harder to be won* than a strong city:
And *such* contentions are like the bars of a castle.

[a] Or, *raise up*   [b] Or, *injured*

---

12. Cf. xvi. 18 and note.

13. Cf. Ecclus. xi. 8.

14. Cf. Malan, vol. ii, p. 523-30, for many parallel sayings. For example, an Indian proverb, 'What is the use of armour to one who has patience?' Toy remarks that we have a conception here, which comes nearer than any found elsewhere in the O. T., to the Greek conception of courage as a virtue.

who can bear. The margin renders 'raise up,' a translation which several commentators favour; but on the whole the rendering of the text seems to be the better one.

16. gift. Undoubtedly the gift here referred to is a present made to a patron, a practice that was very prevalent during the Greek period of Jewish history. Toy refers for instances to Josephus, *Ant.* xii. 4. 2, and xiv. 12. 2.

17. his neighbour: i. e. the opposing party in the suit. The real gist of the verse is that, before a proper decision can be come to, both parties must be heard independently.

18. the mighty. Perhaps 'powerful' would make better sense. On the use of the lot cf. xvi. 33 and note.

19. As is shown by the words in italics, the exact translation of the Hebrew does not make any clear sense, but neither is the

A man's belly shall be filled with the fruit of his mouth ; 20
With the increase of his lips shall he be satisfied.
Death and life are in the power of the tongue ; 21
And they that love it shall eat the fruit thereof.
Whoso findeth a wife findeth a good thing, 22
And obtaineth favour of the LORD.
The poor useth intreaties : 23
But the rich answereth roughly.
[a] He that maketh many friends *doeth it* to his own destruction : 24

---

[a] Heb. *A man of friends.*

interpretation implied in the italicized words justifiable from the form of the original. The comparisons seem to be both far-fetched and inappropriate. The LXX gives quite a different turn to the whole verse, and makes it a praise of brotherly affection and help. It is possible that parts of two different verses have here become confused, and that it is not now possible to ascertain the original meaning.

20. Cf. xiii. 2. The somewhat figurative form of the language does not prevent us from understanding the drift of the proverb. Once again, the importance of taking due care about one's words is insisted upon. Cf. our Lord's teaching in Matt. xii. 37.

21. love. This is generally taken to mean 'love the use of it,' but it must be confessed this is somewhat to strain the meaning of the Hebrew, and it is possible that there may be some corruption of the text. Cf. Ecclus. xxxvii. 17, 18. Some word equivalent to 'control' may have originally stood here, and the meaning have been that to control the tongue is evidence of the greatest possible wisdom and strength. Cf. Jas. iii. 7, 8.

22. a good thing. Rather, 'good fortune.' Some versions read 'a good wife,' but the Hebrew general form is undoubtedly correct, as the writer conceives of the marriage relation in its ideal conditions. The limitation may have been suggested by the later passage, Ecclus. xxvi. 1-3. For the description of the ideal wife as then conceived, cf. chap. xxxi. In Malan's notes many similar proverbs are quoted. The LXX has a weak addition to the verse, which is clearly the reflection of a scribe.

23. This verse does not give a very attractive picture of the manners of the time or of the considerateness of the rich for the poor. Compare the expansion of the saying in Ecclus. xiii. 3, where the moral value of such conduct is pointed out.

24. He that maketh. As the margin shows, the literal

But there is a [a] friend that sticketh closer than a brother.
19 Better is the poor that walketh in his integrity
Than he that is perverse in his lips and is a fool.

[a] Heb. *lover*.

---

rendering is 'a man of friends,' and this has been taken by the majority of commentators to mean a man with many friends. However, the Hebrew word translated 'man' may with the slightest alteration mean 'there are,' in which case the clause would run: 'There are many friends that bring ruin,' which makes an excellent sense and a good contrast with the clause that follows. But a combination of this reading with the translation given in the A. V. produces also an excellent sense, which is followed by Toy, namely, 'There are friends who only seek society.' If this latter meaning is taken, a close and illuminative parallel is to be found in Ecclus. vi. 5-17, and xxxvii. 1-6. Cf. also Shakespeare, *Timon of Athens*, Act ii, sc. 2, lines 11-172 ff., and Act iii, sc. 6, ll. 110 ff., also the famous words of Polonius in *Hamlet*, Act i, sc. 3, ll. 60-5. Further, different words for friend are used in the two clauses, though it is uncertain whether the difference that has been sometimes found between them really inheres in the words themselves.

that sticketh closer. Cf. xvii. 17 and note. The words have often been interpreted of the Messiah in the first instance and so specifically of our Lord, but it can only be said that He is the conspicuous instance of the general truth. The world's history is rich in historic examples of friendships which prove the truth of this proverb, and some of these have been enshrined in the finest English poetry. Cf. Milton's *Lycidas*, Shelley's *Adonais*, Matthew Arnold's *Scholar Gipsy* and *Thyrsis*, and Tennyson's *In Memoriam*. One of the most beautiful uses of the verse in recent English literature is in Swinburne's sonnet, dedicated to Theodore Watts, the closing lines of which are as follow:—

'There is a friend that, as the wise man saith,
Cleaves closer than a brother: nor to me
Hath time not shown, through days like waves at strife,
This truth more sure than all things else but death,
This pearl more perfect found in all the sea,
That washes toward your feet these waifs of life.'

xix. **1. fool.** In xxviii. 6 this verse occurs again with a slight alteration of the second clause, which there reads, 'He that is perverse in his ways though he be rich,' which is probably the correct reading in this passage, since the parallel demands some contrast to the poor of the first clause.

Also, [a] that the soul be without knowledge is not good ; 2
And he that hasteth with his feet [b] sinneth.
The foolishness of man subverteth his way ; 3
And his heart fretteth against the LORD.
Wealth addeth many friends : 4
But [c] the poor is separated from his friend.
A false witness shall not be unpunished ; 5
And he that [d] uttereth lies shall not escape.
Many will intreat the favour of [e] the liberal man : 6
And every man is a friend to him that giveth gifts.

[a] Or, *desire without knowledge is not good*
[b] Or, *misseth* his way
[c] Or, *the friend of the poor separateth himself from him*
[d] Heb. *breatheth out.*
[e] Or, *a prince*

---

2. Also that the soul. For the word 'also' cf. the note on xvii. 26. It is probably out of place here. The rendering of the text in the following words cannot be correct. The margin, 'desire without knowledge,' is better, but has no parallel elsewhere in Proverbs. Wildeboer's suggestion, 'keenness without knowledge' (cf. Rom. x. 2, 'zeal not according to knowledge'), gives a better sense, but the possibility of the translation is not quite certain. Probably the best that can be made of it is to suppose that the word rendered 'soul' is a corruption, and that the words mean 'to act without reflection is not good.'

sinneth. The margin, 'misseth his way,' is better. Cf. the Japanese proverb, 'If you are in a hurry, go round.'

3. Cf. Ecclus. xv. 11-20 ; Jas. i. 13-15.

4. For the idea cf. xiv. 20. The rendering in the margin is also possible, and makes excellent sense, viz. 'the friend of the poor separateth himself from him,' that is, because of poverty the one who has been formerly his friend cools off.

5. Cf. vi. 19 and verse 9 of this chapter, and also the Scottish proverb, 'A bribe enters everywhere without knocking.'

6. the liberal man. Probably the reading of the margin, 'prince,' is to be preferred (cf. xxix. 26), and we have here a reference to the importance of gifts wisely distributed, a practice that has been frequently spoken of throughout the book (cf. xviii. 16 and note). The rendering 'prince' suggests to us the atmosphere of the courts of the Greek period, to which frequent reference has been made.

7 All the brethren of the poor do hate him:
How much more do his friends go far from him!
[a] He pursueth *them with* words, *but* they are gone.
8 He that getteth [b] wisdom loveth his own soul:
He that keepeth understanding shall find good.
9 A false witness shall not be unpunished;
And he that [c] uttereth lies shall perish.
10 Delicate living is not seemly for a fool;
Much less for a servant to have rule over princes.
11 The discretion of a man maketh him slow to anger;
And it is his glory to pass over a transgression.

[a] Or, *He pursueth after words*, which *are nought*
[b] Heb. *heart*. [c] Heb. *breatheth out*.

---

7. The first two clauses of this verse are closely parallel in meaning to the fourth verse above, but there is a third clause which creates great difficulty. In the first place, this is the only instance in this section of the Book of Proverbs where there are three clauses in a verse. It is almost certain, therefore, that the third clause is a fragment of a lost verse, and that, therefore, any attempt to link it to the preceding clauses must be futile. The literal rendering of the clause, not given either by the text or the margin, is 'he who pursues words they are not,' but the Hebrew margin has also a reading, 'they belong to him,' that is, one supposes, the man that is eagerly in search of words gets words alone for his reward; and it may have originally belonged to a proverb dealing with a favourite theme in the book, viz. the vanity of speech and the danger of putting confidence in it. The LXX has either had some quite different text or has made some attempt at a conjectural emendation. At all events, it contains a complete proverb, which runs as follows:—'He that does much harm perfects mischief, and he that uses provoking words shall not escape.'

8. his own soul: i. e. 'himself,' as frequently (cf. xv. 32).

9. Cf. verse 5 above, of which this is only a stronger variation.

10. The first clause is apparently a proverb based on the absurdity of the *parvenu*, who, in the old world, as well as in our own day, was a favourite subject for the satire of the poet and dramatist. On the second clause cf. Eccles. x. 7 and Ecclus. xi. 5.

11. Cf. xiv. 29, and note in the second clause the lofty teaching on forgiveness.

The king's wrath is as the roaring of a lion; 12
But his favour is as dew upon the grass.
A foolish son is the calamity of his father: 13
And the contentions of a wife are a continual dropping.
House and riches are an inheritance from fathers: 14
But a prudent wife is from the LORD.
Slothfulness casteth into a deep sleep; 15
And the idle soul shall suffer hunger.
He that keepeth the commandment keepeth his soul: 16
But he that [a] is careless of his ways shall die.
He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the LORD, 17
And his good deed will he pay him again.
Chasten thy son, seeing there is hope; 18
And set not thy heart on [b] his destruction.

[a] Heb. *despiseth.* [b] Heb. *causing him to die.*

---

12. For the metaphor of the second clause cf. Hosea xiv. 5.

13. The first clause reverts to a subject that has been frequently dealt with (cf. x. 1, &c.), and the second clause finds an echo in xxi. 9: cf. also Chaucer, *Wife of Bath's Prologue*, ll. 278-80.

> 'Thou seyst that dropping houses, and eek smoke,
> And chyding wives maken men to flee
> Out of hes owen hous: a! *ben'cite!*'

14. The philosophy of this verse is of the popular order, and the contrast must not be taken too strictly.

15. soul: i. e. man.

16. soul in this case means 'life.'

of his ways. A very slight alteration of the Hebrew gives the meaning 'of his words,' which is perhaps more appropriate in this connexion.

shall die. The rendering of the Hebrew text is 'shall be put to death,' which certainly seems to imply disregard of the injunctions of the State. The rendering of our text comes from the Hebrew margin.

17. The high ethical teaching of this verse finds its most perfect statement in the parable of our Lord contained in Matt. xxv. 31-46.

18. Cf. xiii. 24 and also xxiii. 13. As long as youth lasts there is the hope of improvement and of settling character, so that all discipline is wise and fruitful.

on his destruction. In early days the legislation of Israel

19 A man of great wrath shall bear the penalty:
For if thou deliver *him*, thou must do it yet again.
20 Hear counsel, and receive [a] instruction,
That thou mayest be wise in thy latter end.
21 There are many devices in a man's heart;
But the counsel of the LORD, that shall stand.
22 [b] The desire of a man is *the measure of* his kindness:

[a] Or, *correction*

[b] Or, *That which maketh a man to be desired is his kindness*

---

probably gave the power of life and death to the father, as was also the case in early Roman law. We find in Exod. xxi. 15, 17 that certain sins against parents were punished with death. In Deut. xxi. 18-21 the son who would not yield to the voice of his parents was brought before the judges, and they had power both to condemn him to death and to carry the sentence into effect.

19. This verse, with our present knowledge, is almost an insoluble riddle. The word 'great' is introduced from the Hebrew margin, while the corresponding word in the text probably means 'frequent,' that is, a man who is often angry. The second clause is almost hopeless to interpret, and the many attempts at explaining it are not so much translations as guesses. Some translators get a meaning out of it by altering the original text, and of these attempts Frankenberg's is probably the best. He renders, 'A man who is fined is very angry, but if he show contempt of court he has to pay more.' It must be confessed, however, that though the meaning thus obtained is quite clear and consistent, the proverb in such a form is very improbable.

20. thy latter end. This phrase generally refers to the end of life, but here probably to the future career of the man who has wisely listened to instruction. Wildeboer considers that the words have this meaning, but are further to be understood in a special sense of progress in the schools of learning. The Syriac version reads 'in thy ways,' an excellent meaning, but it may be rather an interpretation than an authority for altering the text.

21. Cf xvi. 1, &c.

22. The desire of a man. Here is another clause which remains a riddle to the interpreter. The literal translation of the Hebrew is not difficult, but what is meant by it it is impossible to say. The interpretation of the R. V. is that a man is to be judged by his intention rather than by his actual success in carrying out his purposes of kindness, but this goes further in the way of an interpretation than a translation ought to do. The LXX renders

And a poor man is better than a liar.
The fear of the LORD *tendeth* to life : 23
And he *that hath it* shall abide satisfied ;
He shall not be visited with evil.
The sluggard burieth his hand in the dish, 24
And will not so much as bring it to his mouth again.
Smite a scorner, and the simple will learn prudence : 25
And reprove one that hath understanding, *and* he will
  understand knowledge.

He that [a] spoileth his father, and chaseth away his mother, 26

[a] Or, *violently entreateth*

---

with an altered text 'mercy is fruit to a man,' that is, merciful conduct brings gain, which gives a good meaning, but has no connexion with the second clause. Others render, 'what is attractive in a man is his friendliness,' but the best of renderings are speculative, and the original meaning remains uncertain. The second clause must surely belong to some other proverb, and, even as it stands, evidently lacks some word, for the bare contrast between a poor man and a liar is not very intelligible.

23. As this verse stands in the text, it appears as if, like verse 7 above, it had also three clauses. This is not, however, really the case, for the second clause should read as with one subject, 'he shall abide satisfied, unvisited by evil.' The difficulty of the second clause is that the personal pronoun has no antecedent, so that there must have been some original corruption of the text either by omission or otherwise. Delitzch and others render 'he shall rest quietly through the night, fearing no evil.' Obviously the reference is to the man who possesses the fear of the Lord.

24. Cf. xxvi. 15 for an almost exact repetition of this saying, which is full of humour and satire.

dish. Many ancient versions read 'bosom,' obviously the slit of the garment which would form a natural resting-place for he hand. The modern equivalent would be the loafer who perpetually has his hands in his pockets, and is too lazy to take hem out.

25. Smite a scorner. By such an object-lesson the moral simpleton will learn wisdom, but, on the other hand, a man who is morally enlightened will only need reproof in order to become more amenable to instruction.

26. spoileth should rather be translated, with the margin, violently entreateth.'

Is a son that causeth shame and bringeth reproach.
27 Cease, my son, to hear instruction
Only to err from the words of knowledge.
28 A worthless witness mocketh at judgement:
And the mouth of the wicked swalloweth iniquity.
29 Judgements are prepared for scorners,
And stripes for the back of fools.
20 Wine is a mocker, strong drink a brawler;

---

27. Cease, my son. This is the only place in this section of the book where this form of address, so common in the earlier section, occurs. Not only for this reason, but because of the difficulty of interpreting the verses, it is probable that it is an interpolation here. The present form of the Hebrew does not yield any satisfactory meaning, for the words cannot be, as some have supposed, ironical, that is, 'Cease to hear and you will soon err,' nor can it mean a perversion of the good instruction, that is, 'Cease to hear if all you are going to do with your knowledge is to abuse it'; so that some alteration of the text seems essential, either as Toy suggests, 'He who ceases to listen will wander,' or a double negative, 'Do not cease to hear and do not wander.'

28. swalloweth. Some would alter the original so as to render 'uttereth,' but this is not essential, and the strong figure contained in the word of the text is probably better in accordance with the form of the proverb, the wicked eagerly drink down iniquity as a pleasant draught. One is reminded of the language in which Ibsen, as a youth, describes his eager reading of Sallust and Cicero. 'I gulped them down,' he says.

29. Judgements. The change of one letter in the Hebrew enables us to read with the LXX 'rods,' which stands in closer connexion with the second clause.

xx. 1. mocker. This either means that the wine causes men to scoff and brawl, or that the wine itself acts towards men as scoffers and brawlers do. The Scottish proverb says, 'When ale is in, wit is out.'

strong drink. This was probably made from other fruits than the grape (cf. Song of Songs viii. 2), and is spoken of in various parts of the O. T. as intoxicating. It was forbidden to priests and Nazirites, but was apparently a favourite drink of the people (see Deut. xiv. 26).

And whosoever [a] erreth thereby is not wise.
The terror of a king is as the roaring of a lion : 2
He that [b] provoketh him to anger sinneth *against* his own [c] life.
It is an honour for a man to [d] keep aloof from strife : 3
But every fool will be quarrelling.
The slothful will not plow by reason of the winter ; 4
[e] Therefore he shall beg in harvest, and have nothing.
Counsel in the heart of man is *like* deep water ; 5
But a man of understanding will draw it out.
[f] Most men will proclaim every one his own kindness : 6

[a] Or, *reeleth* [b] Or, *angereth himself against him*
[c] Heb. *soul.* [d] Or, *cease*
[e] *Therefore when he seeketh in harvest, there shall be nothing*
[f] Or, *Many a man will meet one that is kind to him*

---

erreth, literally 'reeleth,' probably stands as an equivalent for is 'intoxicated.'

is not wise. Either 'does not act wisely in partaking of these things,' or 'cannot act wisely, when he has partaken of them.'

2. For the metaphor see xix. 12. The second clause of the verse suggests our own common proverb, 'Discretion is the better part of valour.'

3. Cf. the higher teaching, perhaps based on this verse, of Matt. v. 9.

4. of the winter. This should rather be 'in autumn'; the deterring cause is not the cold, as our version suggests, but the sluggard's own laziness. He is too idle to do his work at the proper time, and, therefore, finds himself in poverty, when those who have worked have plenty. The second clause is better rendered by the margin, 'Therefore when he seeketh an harvest there shall be nothing.'

5. The figure contained in this verse is found in our own employment of the word 'deep' to designate a man who is either subtle in conduct or profound in wisdom.

6. The first clause may be more simply rendered 'Many men profess friendship,' which is its exact meaning (cf. xviii. 24). Some versions translate, from a slightly varying Hebrew, 'Many a man is called kind,' which gives a good sense. Cf. Malan, vol. ii, pp. 657-67 for parallels.

But a faithful man who can find?
7 A just man that walketh in his integrity,
Blessed are his children after him.
8 A king that sitteth on the throne of judgement
[a] Scattereth away all evil with his eyes.
9 Who can say, I have made my heart clean,
I am pure from my sin?
10 [b] Divers weights, and divers measures,
Both of them alike are an abomination to the LORD.
11 Even a child maketh himself known by his doings,
Whether his work be pure, and whether it be right.
12 The hearing ear, and the seeing eye,
The LORD hath made even both of them.
13 Love not sleep, lest thou come to poverty;
Open thine eyes, *and* thou shalt be satisfied with bread.

[a] Or, *Winnoweth*

[b] Heb. *A stone and a stone, an ephah and an ephah.*

---

7. Of all the inheritances a man can leave, there is nothing so valuable as his good name, and further, the O. T. writers believed that the blessing of the righteous descended also to their children.

8. Scattereth. Rather, 'winnoweth,' as in verse 26 below, the metaphor arising from the fact that the king is supposed carefully to examine and sift the evidence in person. This gives a clearer and more appropriate meaning than the translation of the text, which means 'dissipates.' This latter function could not be so appropriately referred to the eyes.

9. This utterance stands alone in the Book of Proverbs, though of course the inherent sinfulness of the heart is implied in many verses. The thought is common to all periods of Hebrew literature, though it becomes more prominent in the later and more reflective writings (cf. 1 Kings viii. 46, Ps. li. 5, Eccles. vii. 20, as typical passages).

10. Cf. xi. 1 and note.

11. Even a child. The study of modern psychology has made the truth of this verse much more clear than ever before.

right. A very slight variation of the Hebrew would give the meaning 'bad,' which better preserves the requisite contrast.

13. Cf. vi. 9-11 for warnings against laziness.

It is naught, it is naught, saith the buyer : 14
But when he is gone his way, then he boasteth.
There is gold, and abundance of [a] rubies : 15
But the lips of knowledge are a precious jewel.
Take his garment that is surety for a stranger ; 16
And [b] hold him in pledge *that is surety* for [c] strangers.
Bread of falsehood is sweet to a man ; 17
But afterwards his mouth shall be filled with gravel.
Every purpose is established by counsel : 18
And by wise guidance make thou war.

[a] See Job xxviii. 18. [b] Or, *take a pledge of him*
[c] Another reading is, *a strange woman.*

---

14. This practice of the market-place has remained to the present day, and is enshrined in the pithy Italian proverb, 'If he finds fault he means to buy.'

15. On rubies see iii. 15, note.

a precious jewel: or 'vessel,' for the original word applies both to articles of household use, such as vases or dishes, and to jewellery employed in personal adornment. The translation of the whole verse, as given in our text, is not clear. The first clause in this form stands alone as a bare statement, and in the second clause, by implication, a precious jewel must be regarded as more valuable than the gold and rubies of the first clause. It is better, therefore, to regard, as Toy does, the three comparisons as metaphorically descriptive of lips of knowledge, or to suppose that the text is corrupt, and that originally the verse stated that lips of knowledge are better than all the precious things here named (cf. viii. 11).

16. stranger, in both clauses, is simply equivalent to 'another' (cf. ii. 16, &c.). On the law that permitted a garment to be taken in pledge see Deut. xxiv. 10-13. In the second clause 'hold it in pledge' is more probable than 'him,' though, if the latter be read, we may either understand, in accordance with Nehemiah v. 5, the person of the creditor, or translate 'hold him to his bargain.'

17. 'Bread of falsehood' is 'gained by fraud.'

18. Perhaps it is better to assimilate the form of the first clause to that of the second, and translate 'establish every purpose by counsel.' The second clause shows that the proverb belongs to a period when war was a common occupation. Probably, therefore, it emanates from kings' courts (cf. Luke xiv. 31).

19 He that goeth about as a talebearer revealeth secrets:
Therefore meddle not with him that openeth wide his lips.
20 Whoso curseth his father or his mother,
His lamp shall be put out in the blackest darkness.
21 An inheritance *may be* gotten hastily at the beginning;
But the end thereof shall not be blessed.
22 Say not thou, I will recompense evil:
Wait on the LORD, and he shall save thee.
23 Divers weights are an abomination to the LORD;
And [a] a false balance is not good.
24 A man's goings are of the LORD;
How then can man understand his way?
25 It is a snare to a man [b] rashly to say, *It is* holy,

[a] Heb. *a balance of deceit.*

[b] Or, *rashly to utter holy* words Or, *to devour* that which is *holy*

---

19. openeth wide his lips: i. e. 'is a gossip.'

20. Cf. note on xix. 18.

21. The words in italics should be omitted, and the second clause read 'shall not be blessed in the end.'

gotten hastily is the rendering of the Hebrew margin, the word in the text not being intelligible.

22. Cf. xxiv. 29. Note the frequent use of these words in the N. T.

23. Cf. v. 10 above and also chap. ii. 1.

24. For the first clause compare Ps. xxxvii. 23, which some consider to be the origin of the words here. The writer apparently suggests that, after all that philosophy and reflection can do, there must be much mystery in human life, and probably the inference is that the truest wisdom is shown in ultimate and childlike trust in the Divine guidance.

25. It is holy. All that stands in the Hebrew text is 'holy' or 'consecrated,' and the reference apparently is to the habit of declaring certain gifts to be the inalienable property of the Temple by consecrating them to sacred uses. See the laws given in Lev. xxvii. A somewhat similar practice, that of Corban, is referred to by Jesus, and its abuses rebuked in Mark vii. 21. There, however, it appears that the gift was made with the evil design of cheating a man's parents out of what was their due, and also of cheating God at the same time.

And after vows to make inquiry.
A wise king winnoweth the wicked, 26
And bringeth the *threshing* wheel over them.
The spirit of man is the lamp of the LORD, 27
Searching all the innermost parts of the belly.
Mercy and truth preserve the king: 28

---

make inquiry. The phrase so rendered is not quite definite in meaning, though this is, perhaps, as near the significance as we can reach. Frankenberg understands it in the same sense as the phrase in Lev. xxvii. 33, where we read of the man's making search among the animals in his flock as to which he will give to the Temple. If so translated the meaning would then be that the man endeavoured to substitute a less valuable for a more valuable gift. The meaning is excellent, but it is doubtful whether the word will bear it. The general significance is, at any rate, that a man must carefully count the cost of his offerings before he makes them, and once they are made, gladly accept whatever sacrifice is involved (cf. Eccles. v. 4–6, and the notes there on the risks of hasty vows).

26. wheel. This refers to the threshing-cart which was driven over the grain on the hard surface of the threshing-floor (see Isa. xxviii. 27, 28).

27. The spirit of man. This which, according to the O. T. conception, was breathed into man by God Himself, is to be taken as the equivalent of our word conscience, and is regarded here as being God's vice-regent of the soul. Bishop Butler's famous utterance on conscience might well be derived from this verse: 'Had it strength as it has right, had it power as it has manifest authority, it would absolutely govern the world' (Sermon II).

innermost parts. 'Parts' should rather be 'chambers' (cf. xviii. 8), and the whole phrase denotes the recesses of the inward life (cf. 1 Cor. ii. 10). Toy places this verse after verse 28 on the ground that the latter is closely linked with the thought of verse 26, but that is hardly sufficient ground for the alteration of order.

28. Mercy and truth. For the application of these two terms to a king and his government cf. Isa. xvi. 5. There may be more than a casual connexion between the two passages. The prophet may be there recalling a popular proverb, or, less probably, the writer here derives from the prophetic utterance. That the second clause of the verse should name only the quality mercy is strange, and probably the LXX is right when it reads 'righteousness' instead.

And [a] his throne is upholden by mercy.
29 The glory of young men is their strength:
And the beauty of old men is the hoary head.
30 Stripes that wound cleanse away evil:
And strokes *reach* the innermost parts of the belly.
21 The king's heart is in the hand of the LORD as the watercourses:
He turneth it whithersoever he will.
2 Every way of a man is right in his own eyes:
But the LORD weigheth the hearts.
3 To do justice and judgement
Is more acceptable to the LORD than sacrifice.
4 An high look, and a proud heart,

[a] Or, *he upholdeth his throne*

---

29. Cf. xvi. 31.

30. Stripes that wound. The whole of this verse is very difficult to translate because of the uncertainty of the meaning of the Hebrew and the variations that exist in the versions. 'Stripes that wound' evidently stands for severe chastisement, and the second part of the verse presents the same idea under different form, when it states that physical punishment has a good moral effect upon the inward life. The general meaning, therefore, is clear enough, but uncertainty arises when we examine in detail individual words. For example, the word rendered 'cleanse' is found as a noun in the Book of Esther with the meaning of 'cosmetics,' and some have rendered here 'cosmetics purify the body, and blows the soul,' but that is rather a free paraphrase, with a doubtful basis, than a translation. We must be content, therefore, with the general meaning of the verse, and decide, with Frankenberg, that it is impossible to translate the first clause with accuracy. For the idea cf. Ecclus. xxii. 19.

xxi. **1. watercourses.** These are the artificial canals used for irrigation, which were common both in Babylonia and Egypt, and are referred to in Isa. lviii. 11, and Deut. xi. 10. Just as the irrigators had full control over the supply of water admitted to the field, so the Lord is regarded as having full control over the mind and heart of the king.

2. Cf. xvi. 2, of which this is practically a repetition.

3. Cf. xv. 8 and note, and 1 Sam. xv. 22.

[a] *Even* the lamp of the wicked, is sin.
The thoughts of the diligent *tend* only to plenteousness : 5
But every one that is hasty *hasteth* only to want.
The getting of treasures by a lying tongue 6
Is a vapour driven to and fro ; [b] they *that seek them* seek death.

---

[a] Or, And *the tillage*

[b] Or, according to some ancient authorities, they are *snares of death* or, into *the snares of death*

---

4. Even the lamp. As the two clauses of this verse stand they do not seem to have any obvious connexion, and, therefore, some editors consider that we have fragments of two proverbs. The margin of the R. V. gives 'tillage' instead of 'lamp,' but the form of the word read in order to produce this translation rather means 'the breaking up of fallow ground,' though Delitzsch understands it to refer to the whole fruit of the soil. With either of these translations the only way to make sense of the verse is to understand some connective words, and render in this fashion, 'A high look and a proud heart, these lead to the harvest of the wicked, which is sin'; or, in the other case, comparing xiii. 9, we should say, with Wildeboer, 'In haughtiness of vision and pride of heart is the good fortune (i. e. lamp) of the wicked, but it ends in sin.' On the whole, however, it seems best to decide that the verse consists of two unrelated fragments, and that no solution of the problem, with our present material, is possible.

5. The thoughts of the diligent. The thought of the verse is fairly clear, but the form of it difficult, for example, 'every one' does not answer well to 'thoughts' in the first clause, and 'thoughts' is probably better rendered by 'methods.' Again, 'hasty' is not a good contrast to 'diligent,' and it may be better to follow the Latin version and read 'slothful,' especially as the sluggard is so prominent a figure in the book (cf. xiii. 4).

6. The getting of treasures. We have already read, in x. 2, of the profitlessness of 'treasures of wickedness,' and here they are compared with a fleeting vapour. It is the last part of the second clause that affords the great difficulty here. The Hebrew literally is 'seeking death,' but it hardly seems possible to apply this to the vapour and its extinction. The majority of commentators are, therefore, inclined to follow the LXX and read 'snares of death.' In this case there will be two metaphors used to describe the evil result of attempting to gain treasure by false means. It will be intangible as a vapour, deadly as a snare. Cf. xxiii. 5.

7 The violence of the wicked shall sweep them away;
Because they refuse to do judgement.
8 The way of him that is laden with guilt is exceeding crooked:
But as for the pure, his work is [a] right.
9 It is better to dwell in the corner of the housetop,
Than with a contentious woman in [b] a wide house.
10 The soul of the wicked desireth evil:
His neighbour findeth no favour in his eyes.
11 When the scorner is punished, the simple is made wise:
And [c] when the wise is instructed, he receiveth knowledge.
12 [d] The righteous man considereth the house of the wicked;

[a] Or, *straight*
[b] Or, *a house in common* Heb. *a house of society.*
[c] Or, *when one considereth the wise*
[d] Or, *One that is righteous ... he overthroweth the wicked &c.*

---

7. sweep them away. The metaphor contained in the original is presumably that of a sweep-net rather than of a besom, as the English seems to suggest.

8. his work is right. Better, 'his conduct is straight.'

9. This verse is repeated in xxv. 24, and there should also be compared with it xix. 13, v. 19 of this chapter, and xxvii. 15.

the corner of the housetop. It was no uncommon thing to sleep on the housetop, and sometimes extra chambers were built there (cf. 1 Kings xxii. 19), but to be confined to such a space would certainly be irksome. Some suppose the phrase to mean 'pinnacle,' and that the reference is to the danger of the situation; but this is unlikely.

a wide house. The literal meaning of the Hebrew is 'house of a companion,' which is generally taken to be equivalent to 'in company,' but may probably be interpreted as in the English text, which certainly preserves the requisite contrast.

10. findeth no favour. Rather, 'exciteth no kindly feeling.' The evil that is spoken about in the verse is that of excessive selfishness, a man being so self-centred as to leave no thought of kindness for his neighbour.

11. simple. That is, as commonly in the book, the man who is morally undisciplined, who is here said to receive instruction from witnessing the punishment of the scorner. The second clause of the verse shows the progress made in real knowledge by the discipline of a man's own life.

12. The righteous man. This, as the margin shows, should

How the wicked are overthrown to *their* ruin.
Whoso stoppeth his ears at the cry of the poor, 13
He also shall cry, but shall not be heard.
A gift in secret [a] pacifieth anger, 14
And a present in the bosom strong wrath.
It is joy to the righteous to do judgement; 15
[b] But it is a destruction to the workers of iniquity.
The man that wandereth out of the way of understanding 16
Shall rest in the congregation of [c] the dead.

---

[a] Heb. *bendeth.* [b] Or, *But destruction* shall be *to &c.*
[c] Or, *the shades* Heb. *Rephaim.*

---

rather be translated 'the righteous One,' that is, God (cf. xxiv. 12). For the second clause of the verse should read 'and overturns the wicked to ruin.' This could not be said of the righteous, and the translation given in the English version is improbable, if not impossible. The difficulty about the phrase is that it is nowhere else applied to God in the O. T., save in Job xxxiv. 17, and consequently many regard it as an impossible rendering here. Wildeboer illustrates the indefinite usage from Arabic, and supports the reference to God. If it is not to be understood of God, then some alteration of the text is necessary. Hitzig suggests that we might read 'the righteous man considers his house, but wickedness hurls the wicked to ruin,' in which case the connexion of the two clauses is not clear, though some light may be gained from a passage quoted by Frankenberg, namely, Ps. of Sol. vi. 8, 'The righteous man maketh inquisition continually in his own house, that he may put away iniquity.'

13. cry. The reference is to an appeal to his fellow men, not to God as has sometimes been understood. 'Heard' is here used in the sense of 'answered' (cf. Ecclus. iv. 1-6).

14. Cf. xvii. 8, and note. The LXX has, for the second clause, 'he who withholds a gift excites strong wrath,' but this does not seem justified by the Hebrew.

15. do judgement. More probably, 'the doing of judgement,' that is, 'the carrying out of judgement,' for this meaning better preserves the contrast of the second clause.

destruction may also be translated 'dismay,' which contrasts better with joy, but, on the other hand, 'destruction' is a stronger word.

16. the dead. On the word so rendered see the note on ii. 18. Probably the whole of this verse refers to the premature death of the wicked, an idea we have met with several times.

17 He that loveth pleasure shall be a poor man:
He that loveth wine and oil shall not be rich.
18 The wicked is a ransom for the righteous;
And the treacherous *cometh* in the stead of the upright.
19 It is better to dwell in a desert land,
Than with [a] a contentious and fretful woman.
20 There is precious treasure and oil in the dwelling of the wise;

[a] Or, *a contentious woman and vexation*

---

17. wine and oil. These are here put for extravagant luxury, and the whole verse may be compared with our common proverb 'Waste not, want not.'

18. For the general idea of this verse cf. xi. 8. The teaching of the verse is obviously a not uncommon one in Hebrew literature, that the wicked man is punished, while the righteous escapes, though it is here stated in the very strong form of the wicked's being actually a substitute for the righteous.

19. desert land. The idea is, of course, the solitariness, not the barrenness of the place. This verse gives the idea of verse 9 in a stronger form. The second clause in the Hebrew really reads 'than with a contentious woman and vexation,' that is to say, that the two are equivalent, but the Hebrew form of statement is more picturesque than the English.

20. precious treasure and oil. In the LXX the word 'oil' is omitted, and it certainly seems a curious combination, and probably the word may have been introduced from verse 17 above. A further difficulty arises from the fact of attributing precious treasure to the possession of the wise man as such. As Frankenberg says, when the subject in question is the wisdom of the sage, we expect some other proof of it than the fact of a well-stocked cellar and kitchen. Probably the expressions are to be taken as figurative for the treasures of wisdom. A further difficulty is introduced by the text of the LXX, which reads 'precious treasure will rest on the mouth of the wise man,' which would, of course, refer to the wise words he uttered, and in this case the swallowing of the treasure by the fool might be supposed to refer to his gulping down, as it were, the words of the sage without any reflection as to what they may mean. This would be a humorous picture in agreement with others in the book. The same idea may be taken from the translation of our own text by assuming that the reference is to treasures of wisdom offered to the foolish man, which he cannot

But a foolish man swalloweth it up.
He that followeth after righteousness and mercy 21
Findeth life, righteousness, and honour.
A wise man scaleth the city of the mighty, 22
And bringeth down the strength of the confidence thereof.
Whoso keepeth his mouth and his tongue 23
Keepeth his soul from troubles.
The proud and haughty man, scorner is his name, 24
He worketh in the arrogance of pride.
The desire of the slothful killeth him; 25

---

appreciate, and will in that case remind us of our Lord's warning not to cast pearls before swine.

21. righteousness. It will be noted that this word occurs in both clauses of the verse, but in the second position it is questionable on two grounds. First, because it is unlikely that the first clause should contain two elements, and the second three, and, further, because it is not probable that it should be said that to pursue righteousness wins righteousness, unless that were stated in another sense altogether from that of the verse. Life and honour, this proverb states, are the rewards that come from the pursuit of righteousness and mercy.

22. scaleth the city. Cf. Eccles. ix. 15 for the superiority of wisdom over mere strength in matters of warfare. Cf. also Prov. xx. 18, xxiv. 5-6; but, as Plumptre reminds us, the proverb is capable of wider application, and may refer to all the victories of intellectual and spiritual strength over forces that seem to the casual observer to be much more powerful. Plumptre also points out that the LXX version here may have suggested to Paul the language of 2 Cor. x. 4.

23. Cf. xiii. 8 and xviii. 21. Toy suggests that the troubles here referred to are probably social and legal ones, and compares Eccles. x. 20.

24. Toy is probably right in his contention that we should make the scorner the subject of this verse, and translate 'scorner is the name of the proud, arrogant man,' and he further proceeds as follows: 'If this interpretation be correct, it appears to point to the existence of a precise philosophical form of instruction in the schools, and to the distinct recognition of a class of arrogant disregarders of moral law, both of which facts suit the time when the Jews came under Greek influence.'

25. We here find a further reference to the slothful (see

For his hands refuse to labour.
26 There is that coveteth greedily all the day long:
But the righteous giveth and withholdeth not.
27 The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination:
How much more, when he bringeth it [a] with a wicked mind!
28 A false witness shall perish:

---

[a] Or, to atone *for wickedness*

xix. 24, &c.), who is now described as practically committing suicide by his inordinate love of ease.

26. There is that coveteth. This is rather a desperate attempt to give a meaning to words that in the original are very difficult to translate, and it is impossible to decide whether the first clause refers to the sluggard of the previous verse or not. It may be that there is here a further reference to his continual desire for ease, but, if so, the text must be corrupt. Some have emended it so as to read 'the sluggard desires, but has not.' This, however, in addition to being an improbable alteration, does not give a clear connexion with the second clause. It may, on the other hand, be an equivalent form of the first clause of verse 10 in this chapter. The second clause would then be a positive statement of the saying that is given negatively in the second clause of the tenth verse.

27. The sacrifice of the wicked. This clause is repeated from xv. 8, where, however, the words 'to the Lord' are added. They might just as well be found here, but there is no manuscript evidence for them. Obviously the words contemplate a wicked man, who imagines that the sacrifice will in itself placate God without any change in the life of him who offers the sacrifice (cf. Ps. l. 16-21).

with a wicked mind. It is difficult to see how this clause adds much to the previous one, for the wicked man is supposed to offer the sacrifice with a wicked mind, unless, indeed, the first clause thinks only of sacrifices offered in thoughtlessness, while the second contemplates sacrifices offered with the definite purpose of attempting to bribe the Deity. The distinction scarcely seems probable. It is better, therefore, to read with the margin, 'to atone for crime,' which would reveal an idea as to sacrifice that is not uncommon to many popular religions, viz. that a sacrifice would induce the Deity to wink at evil practices, even perhaps to give countenance to them. The whole verse throws a rather lurid light upon much of the popular religious practice of the times.

28. A false witness. The first clause is a slightly stronger

But the man that heareth shall speak [a] unchallenged.
A wicked man hardeneth his face: 29
But as for the upright, [b] he ordereth his ways.
There is no wisdom nor understanding 30
Nor counsel against the LORD.
The horse is prepared against the day of battle: 31
But [c] victory is of the LORD.
A *good* name is rather to be chosen than great riches, **22**

[a] Or, *so as to endure*
[b] Another reading is, *he considereth his way.* [c] Or, *deliverance*

---

form of that found in xix. 5 and 9. The second clause, in the present condition of the text, is so obscure that more than one modern editor leaves it untranslated. The literal rendering of the Hebrew is 'a man who hears shall speak for ever,' which does not seem either intelligible or desirable. Some refer it to the quality of the hearing, understanding it to mean 'the man who is careful of how and what he hears,' so as to become a trustworthy witness; but the word does not seem to bear that meaning, neither is the second part of the clause any clearer. The 'shall speak unchallenged' of our text is without authority. The text has been so altered as to read 'a man of truth will be remembered for ever,' but the alteration is somewhat violent, and the meaning not very satisfactory.

29. hardeneth his face. This phrase has already occurred in vii. 13, and, as in that passage, it refers to the impudent bearing of the wicked, who will brazen out any statement they make utterly irrespective of its truth or falsehood.

ordereth his ways. This is one possible translation of the Hebrew, but the rendering of the margin 'considers his ways' is probably better. Unlike the wicked man, the righteous is not reckless as to what he says and how he acts.

30. For the thought of the second clause cf. Job v. 12, 13.

31. prepared is really 'caparisoned.'

victory is properly 'deliverance,' as that is the special aspect of the delivery here considered. (Cf. for the thought of the passage Ps. xxxiii. 16–21.) Horses seem to have been a comparatively late introduction into the war methods of the Hebrews, and the early prophets objected to them partly as a foreign custom, and partly perhaps on conservative grounds of prejudice against innovations (see Deut. xvii. 16).

xxii. **1. A good name.** Cf. for the thought Eccles. vii. 1 and Ecclus. xli. 12.

And [a] loving favour rather than silver and gold.
2 The rich and the poor meet together:
The LORD is the maker of them all.
3 A prudent man seeth the evil, and hideth himself:
But the simple pass on, and [b] suffer for it.
4 The reward of humility *and* the fear of the LORD
Is riches, and honour, and life.
5 Thorns *and* snares are in the way of the froward:
He that keepeth his soul shall be far from them.
6 Train up a child [c] in the way he should go,

---

[a] Or, *favour is better than &c.* [b] Heb. *are mulcted.*
[c] Heb. *according to his way.*

---

loving favour. This is better rendered 'to be well thought of,' to be, as Toy says, a '*persona grata.*' The general meaning of the verse may either be to point to the value of a good reputation in bringing respect to its owner, or it may refer to the inward satisfaction it affords to the man who has it.

2. The thought of this verse is a fairly frequent one in later Jewish literature (cf. Ecclus. xi. 14).

3. The meaning of this verse is obvious, and is in line with much of the teaching of the book, which frequently commends prudence and forethought. The LXX gives a different rendering of the first clause, evidently borrowed from xxi. 11, and must have either misunderstood this, or had a different text. Its translation is 'a shrewd man who sees the wicked severely punished is greatly instructed thereby.'

humility and the fear of the LORD. The 'and' is not part of the Hebrew text, though the majority of editors introduce it. It is possible, however, to translate in two other ways, either 'the reward of humility is the fear of the Lord,' or 'the reward of humility which is the fear of the Lord,' that is, humility is then defined as practically equivalent to piety. If the general sense of the term is taken, however, we may compare xv. 33.

5. Thorns. If we retain the reading so translated, this must refer to the hedges which bar the path, and which the man who strays from it must encounter. But an alteration of the Hebrew gives 'traps' as an alternative. With this reading the clause has been well translated 'snares are hidden in the path of the froward.'

keepeth his soul. As has frequently been noted already, this phrase should mean 'he who has regard to himself.'

6. The only point about this well-known verse that requires any

And even when he is old he will not depart from it.
The rich ruleth over the poor, 7
And the borrower is servant to the lender.
He that soweth iniquity shall reap [a] calamity: 8
And the rod of his wrath shall fail.
He that hath a [b] bountiful eye shall be blessed; 9
For he giveth of his bread to the poor.
Cast out the scorner, and contention shall go out; 10
Yea, strife and ignominy shall cease.

[a] Or, *vanity* [b] Heb. *good.*

---

elucidation is the exact significance of the phrase 'in the way he should go.' As the margin shows, the literal rendering of the Hebrew is 'according to his way,' and it is not safe to interpret this as necessarily meaning the way of righteousness. It more probably implies the way of destiny, it being assumed that the parents will have determined on a proper way in which to lead their offspring.

7. Parallel passages to the thought of this verse have occurred several times in the book (cf. xi. 29, xii. 24, &c.). Whether servant, that is, slave, of the second clause is to be taken literally or not, is questionable. It was possible (as 2 Kings iv. 1 and other passages prove) for the creditor to make a slave of the debtor, but whether the reference is to that practice or not is here uncertain.

8. Calamity. As the margin shows, this may also be translated 'vanity,' or even 'naught' or 'nothingness,' and, in light of what is to be said of the probable meaning of the second clause, this translation is preferable.

rod of his wrath. This rendering is doubly improbable. First of all, wrath is not so likely a translation of the Hebrew as is 'insolence,' in which case, of course, rod would be taken as the emblem of power, which the insolent man abuses. The translation of the text refers to rod as to the instrument of punishment. A slight alteration of the Hebrew text suggested by Frankenberg gives the meaning 'produce of his tillage,' which fits in admirably with the figure of the previous clause, and gives a very intelligible meaning to the whole passage.

9. a bountiful eye, i. e. 'a kindly disposition.'

10. The meaning of this verse is clear enough, but the LXX gives it a very special significance, though it is difficult to decide whether their translation is a free paraphrase of the text, another

11 He that loveth [a] pureness of heart,
[b] *For* the grace of his lips the king shall be his friend.
12 The eyes of the LORD preserve *him that hath* knowledge,
But he overthroweth the words of the treacherous man.
13 The sluggard saith, There is a lion without:
I shall be [c] murdered in the streets.
14 The mouth of strange women is a deep pit:
He [d] that is abhorred of the LORD shall fall therein.
15 Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child;
But the rod of correction shall drive it far from him.

---

[a] Another reading is, *the pure of heart.*
[b] Or, *Hath grace in his lips* Or, That *hath grace in his lips*
[c] Or, *slain* [d] Or, *against whom the LORD hath indignation*

---

and more special proverb introduced in place of it, or a rendering of some different Hebrew original. It translates 'cast the scorner out of the assembly, and strife will depart with him, for so long as he remains seated in a council he insults every one.'

11. The difficulty of this verse is that the syntax of the original is defective, there being no word to govern the phrase 'the grace of his lips.' A most probable interpretation is 'on whose lips is grace,' and on the whole that gives the best meaning.

12. preserve. This word offers great difficulty, because its usage does not permit it to govern directly the abstract word 'knowledge' which follows it, and, as the italics show, the interpolated words are a conjectural addition. Probably some alteration of the text is requisite, which will give the meaning 'are on the righteous,' as in Ps. xxxv. 15. In that case we should have an exact contrast to the second clause.

13. This verse is another humorous hit at the slothful, and recurs with the slightest variation in xxvi. 13. The LXX introduces 'murderers' into the second clause, but the Hebrew understands the lion to be referred to in both clauses.

14. strange women. The word is the one frequently employed in the first nine chapters, and is properly 'adulteresses.'

that is abhorred. Better, 'with whom the Lord is indignant.' Bunyan applies the proverb to Madam Wanton in the *Pilgrim's Progress.*

15. Corporal punishment was an almost universal practice in the ancient world, and Toy quotes the saying of Menander, 'He who is not flogged is not educated' (cf. xiii. 24).

He that oppresseth the poor to increase his *gain*, 16
And he that giveth to the rich, *cometh* only to want.

Incline thine ear, and hear the words of the wise, 17
And apply thine heart unto my knowledge.
For it is a pleasant thing if thou keep them within thee, 18
If they be established together upon thy lips.

---

16. As will be seen from the italics in this verse, the translation is very uncertain, because the connective words in the Hebrew are not clear. Of the large number of interpretations that have been offered, Toy's is perhaps as satisfactory as any. He would alter 'oppresses' to 'gives to,' though he confesses that it is not easy to understand how the corruption could arise, and then renders 'he who gives to the poor it is gain to him, he who gives to the rich it is only loss.' The latter part of the clause obviously refers to gifts given to the wealthy in order to secure their favour.

17. With this verse begins a new section of the book, which continues to the end of chapter xxiv. It is marked by the introduction of the author's personality in this verse ('my knowledge'), by the altered form from couplets to strophes, and by the recurrence of the words 'my son,' which was characteristic of the earlier chapters of the book. In many ways it reminds us, even more intimately than other sections, of the Book of Ecclesiasticus. It has affiliations with the style of the first nine chapters, but has also certain clear distinctions, which mark it out as being from a different hand. In this first section, verses 17 to 21, which is most interesting from its revelation of the personality of its author, the text is peculiarly difficult. It is obviously corrupt, and the LXX varies very much from the Hebrew. It seems as if the present Hebrew text were something of a paraphrase of an earlier one. In this verse it is doubtful whether the words 'of the wise' should be part of the text or not. If it read 'my words' it would form a better contrast to the second clause.

18. pleasant. This word is also doubtful, as it is hardly appropriately applied to the keeping in mind of knowledge, and so the majority of editors are inclined to substitute some word to signify 'profitable,' though of course there is no manuscript authority for it. The Greek seems to add the word to the previous verse, reading there 'apply thy mind that thou mayest know that they are good.'

If. This should rather be 'so that,' and for 'be established together' a better reading would be 'abide,' or perhaps 'be always at hand,' the reference probably being to the readiness of a man who is well stocked with wisdom.

19 That thy trust may be in the LORD,
I have made *them* known to thee this day, even to thee.
20 Have not I written unto thee [a] excellent things
[b] Of counsels and knowledge;

[a] The word is doubtful. Another reading is, *heretofore.*
[b] Or, *In*

---

19. this day. So far as the words stand in the verse, they are clear enough, but in connexion with the words that follow they are not quite so clear, because, as we shall see immediately, the translation of the next verse is very uncertain, and if it refers to teaching that has been given formerly, the contrast is not clear. This verse as it stands seems to be an emphatic statement of a reiteration of the great fundamentals of spiritual wisdom to an individual pupil here addressed.

20. excellent things. The word rendered 'excellent' is extremely uncertain in meaning. Many translate 'formerly,' but the word is really only part of the Hebrew equivalent to that adverb, and, as has already been said, the contrast thus introduced is not clear. There is an alternative word given in the Hebrew text, which means 'officers,' and is translated 'captains' in 2 Sam. xxiii. 8 and elsewhere. It is supposed to be used metaphorically here of leading or governing ideas, but the usage is not supported by any valid example. As the root of the word is the numeral 'three' the meaning 'formerly' arises from the thought of three days ago, that of 'officer' from his being the third man in the chariot, so the LXX and other versions render 'triply' here. This latter translation played a large part in earlier exegesis; Origen, for example, taking it as a support of his favourite theory of the threefold sense of Scripture, namely, the literal, allegorical, and spiritual, while other interpreters have understood it to refer to the threefold division of the Hebrew scriptures into law, prophets, and sacred writings.[1] The LXX, however, alters the text further so as to read 'do thou transcribe them triply for thyself.' Among all these conflicting views it is impossible to discover any certainty, and we are compelled to declare the Hebrew text inexplicable, and to come to the conclusion that it is either hopelessly corrupt or that we must be satisfied with the very general meaning of some reference to written wisdom. The reference to written words at all points to a very late origin for the passage (cf. Eccles. xii. 10 and 12).

---

[1] This verse is quoted in the Jewish controversy about the canonicity of the Book of Esther to prove that the threefold division is already made, and so no fresh book is admissible.

To make thee know [a] the certainty of the words of 21
truth,
That thou mayest carry back words of truth to them that
send thee?

Rob not the poor, [b] because he is poor, 22
Neither [c] oppress the afflicted in the gate:
For the LORD will plead their cause, 23
And despoil of life those that despoil them.
Make no friendship with a man that is given to anger; 24
And with a wrathful man thou shalt not go:
Lest thou learn his ways, 25
And get a snare to thy soul.
Be thou not one of them that strike hands, 26
Or of them that are sureties for debts:
If thou hast not wherewith to pay, 27
Why should he take away thy bed from under thee?

---

[a] Or, *of a certainty the words &c.* [b] Or, *for* [c] Or, *crush*

21. certainty. This is the same word as that translated 'truth' later in the clause, and it may probably have crept in here and in the second clause through error, as both clauses read better without it.

them that send thee. The LXX is followed by a large majority of editors in giving the undoubtedly better sense 'them who question thee.' The idea may be compared with that in 1 Peter iii. 15, 'ready to give answer to every man that asketh you a reason.' Cf. also Ecclus. viii. 9, xxxix. 6–9.

22. With this verse begins the new section to which the preceding paragraph serves as a preface.

oppress the afflicted. Better, 'crush the poor.'

the gate. This, of course, stands for the place of justice (cf. i. 21).

23. despoil. This word is only found elsewhere in Malachi iii. 8, 9, where it is translated 'rob,' but it seems to have something of the meaning of 'cheat' about it.

25. get a snare to thy soul. This is rather 'bring destruction on thyself.'

26. strike hands. See note on vi. 1.

27. take away thy bed. For the laws which mercifully limited

28 Remove not the ancient landmark,
Which thy fathers have set.
29 Seest thou a man [a] diligent in his business? he shall stand before kings;
He shall not stand before [b] mean men.
23 When thou sittest to eat with a ruler,
Consider diligently [c] him that is before thee;
2 [d] And put a knife to thy throat,

---

[a] Or, *skilful* [b] Heb. *obscure.* [c] Or, *what* [d] Or, *For thou wilt put*

---

the exaction of pledges, see Deut. xxiv. 10–13, and for a practical application of these ideas see Job xxxi. 19, 20.

28. landmark. Here again we have reference to the legal directions, and the verse is closely parallel to Deut. xix. 14, while other passages in the O.T. denounce the practice here forbidden (see Job xxiv. 2), &c. Among many ancient peoples these landmarks were considered as sacred things. This first clause is found again in xxiii. 10. Mr. Hull says, with respect to this subject, in *HBD.* iii. 24*b*: 'In Palestine these landmarks are scrupulously respected; and in passing along a road or pathway one may observe from time to time a stone placed by the edge of the field from which a shallow furrow has been ploughed, marking the limits of cultivation of neighbouring proprietors.'

29. diligent. Better, with the margin, 'skilful.'

stand before, i. e. 'enter the service of.'

mean, i. e. 'obscure.' This verse is engraved upon the frame of Maddox Brown's famous picture entitled 'Work,' and has proved an incentive to many distinguished careers.

xxiii. **1. a ruler.** This is an obvious reference to the tyranny and uncertain temper of Eastern potentates, and the warning is directed against anything like self-indulgence while in their presence.

him that is before thee. It might also be read 'what is before thee,' and in this case would refer to making a wise choice of food; but the meaning is not so probable.

2. And put a knife. This is probably a figurative expression for self-restraint. Some understand it, however, as introduced by 'for' instead of 'and,' and read 'for thou wilt put a knife', &c. In this case it would be a statement of the ruin that would follow upon negligence of conduct in such dangerous company. Cf. with the whole passage Ecclus. ix. 13.

If thou be a man given to appetite.
Be not desirous of his dainties; 3
Seeing they are deceitful meat.
Weary not thyself to be rich; 4
Cease [a] from thine own wisdom.
[b] Wilt thou set thine eyes upon that which is not? 5
For *riches* certainly make themselves wings,
Like an eagle that flieth toward heaven.
Eat thou not the bread of him that hath an evil eye, 6

[a] Or, *by reason of thine own understanding*

[b] Or, *Wilt thou set thine eyes upon it? it is gone:* Heb. *Shall thine eyes fly upon it and it is not?*

---

3. Be not desirous. This clause, it will be noticed, recurs as the second clause of verse 6, and some editors consider that it is out of place here, seeing that, in the second clause, the Hebrew employs the singular, though the E. V. has altered it to plural, and also because 'deceitful meat' is not considered by them appropriate to the subject under discussion. This latter objection, however, is scarcely valid, as the tyrant may be deceitful as well as capricious.

4. from thine own wisdom. The rendering of the text can only mean that the man's wisdom consists in the desire to become rich, and, as the verse stands, it must be confessed the two clauses are practically identical in meaning. It may be better, therefore, to follow the suggestion of the margin and render 'let thine own wisdom (i. e. 'common sense') teach thee a better way.' Some would alter the text so as to render 'wisdom' instead of 'purpose.'

5. Wilt thou set, &c. This rendering of the first clause is inaccurate, and the correct translation is that of the margin, viz. 'Wilt thou set thine eyes upon it, it is gone,' which is a strong way of stating the fact that the hunt for riches is delusive. There may be some corruption of the text, and originally the first and second clauses may have been united into one sentence, but it is not possible with certainty to restore the text. The meaning is clear enough.

6. an evil eye. In this connexion the phrase means 'niggardly,' and is found again in xxviii. 22, the only other occurrence of it in the O. T. In the *Sayings of the Jewish Fathers*, v. 19, we find the four characters of alms-givers described as follows: 'He who is willing to give, but not that others should give, his eye is evil towards the things of others: that others should give, and he should

Neither desire thou his dainties:
7 For [a] as he reckoneth within himself, so is he:
Eat and drink, saith he to thee;
But his heart is not with thee.
8 The morsel which thou hast eaten shalt thou vomit up,
And lose thy sweet words.
9 Speak not in the hearing of a fool;
For he will despise the wisdom of thy words.
10 [b] Remove not the ancient landmark;
And enter not into the fields of the fatherless:

---

[a] Or, *as one that reckoneth*

[b] See ch. xxii. 28.

---

not give, his eye is evil towards his own: he who would give and let others give is pious: he who will not give nor let others give is wicked.' Cf. by way of contrast Prov. xxii. 9, and for a reference to the evil eye in this sense in the N. T., Matt. vi. 23, and xx. 15.

7. as he reckoneth, &c. This translation is by no means certain, nor are any of the suggested emendations very satisfactory. Toy emends so as to read 'he deals stingily with these as with himself,' but nothing satisfactory can be made out of the present text.

8. The morsel, &c. The meaning of this verse is very obscure, and no satisfactory connexion can be established between the two clauses. Toy makes the second clause of verse 3 take the place of the second clause here, and understands the verse to refer to the disgust of the guest at his host's insincerity, following Pinsker. He also attaches the last clause of this verse to the end of verse 9, where it certainly makes good sense, but such treatment of the text is purely conjectural, and somewhat radical.

sweet words. In taking the text as it stands the majority of commentators understand by this expression the courteous words of thanks used by the guest, but it is very difficult to give any intelligible meaning to the expression so interpreted, and the only course open to us seems to be to confess that the whole condition of the text is too uncertain to interpret.

9. For the thought of this verse cf. Matt. vii. 6. See also note on previous verse.

10. Cf. xxii. 28, and note. For 'ancient' a slight alteration of text enables us to read 'landmark of the widow.' This corresponds better with the second clause, and the Hebrew law was particularly careful of the rights of the widow.

For their redeemer is strong; 11
He shall plead their cause against thee.
Apply thine heart unto [a] instruction, 12
And thine ears to the words of knowledge.
Withhold not correction from the child: 13
For [b] if thou beat him with the rod, he shall not die.
Thou shalt beat him with the rod, 14
And shalt deliver his soul from [c] Sheol.
My son, if thine heart be wise, 15
My heart shall be glad, even mine:
Yea, my reins shall rejoice, 16
When thy lips speak right things.
Let not thine heart envy sinners: 17
But *be thou* in the fear of the LORD all the day long:
For surely there is a [d] reward; 18

[a] Or, *correction* [b] Or, *though* [c] Or, *the grave*
[d] Or, *sequel* Or, *future* Heb. *latter end.*

---

11. redeemer. This is the technical Hebrew term *goel*, for whose duties as regards land see Lev. xxv. 25, and also the story of Ruth. The thought here is that God Himself is the *goel* of these afflicted ones, and will satisfactorily plead their cause. (Cf. Ps. lxvii. 5.)

13. Cf. xix. 18, xxii. 15.

15. My heart. This means, as we have seen on former occasions, 'I myself.'

16. my reins. This has the same significance as 'my heart' in the previous verse, as according to Hebrew psychology the heart and kidneys were the sources of intellectual and emotional life.

17. be thou in the fear. A slight alteration of the text avoids the insertion of any words, and enables us to render 'fear the Lord.'

18. For surely. Literally, 'for if.' If the Hebrew text is allowed to stand, then there is a difficulty about the translation, since a conditional first clause does not give a good meaning for the second. Probably the 'if' should be omitted, and the statement of both clauses be read as an assurance.

reward. This is literally 'latter end,' and is generally sup-

And thy hope shall not be cut off.
19 Hear thou, my son, and be wise,
And guide thine heart in the way.
20 Be not among winebibbers;
Among gluttonous eaters of flesh:
21 For the drunkard and the glutton shall come to poverty:
And drowsiness shall clothe *a man* with rags.
22 Hearken unto thy father that begat thee,
And despise not thy mother when she is old.
23 Buy the truth, and sell it not;
Yea, wisdom, and instruction, and understanding.
24 The father of the righteous shall greatly rejoice:
And he that begetteth a wise child shall have joy of him.
25 Let thy father and thy mother be glad,
And let her that bare thee rejoice.
26 My son, give me thine heart,

---

posed to mean 'hope.' The closest parallel is perhaps that of Jer. xxix. 11, 'Thoughts of peace and not of evil to give you a latter end and hope.'

19. in the way. This suggests the famous figurative use of the word that became common in the early days of Christianity (cf. Acts xix. 9, 23), and it is also a term employed in certain other religions. This form of expression stands alone in Proverbs, and some have consequently questioned its accuracy here, but apparently without reason. It may very well have been an expression current in the schools.

20. The close combination of the two words here reminds us of the reproach cast at our Lord, which He Himself quotes (see Matt. xi. 19). It may be from this proverb that the combination was found familiarly on the lips of the people.

21. drowsiness. In the *Sayings of the Jewish Fathers*, iii. 16, we find morning sleep and midday wine associated as two of the means of destruction.

22. thy father that begat thee. Toy notes that this form of expression is frequent in Assyrian inscriptions. On the reverence that is due to elders see Ecclus. iii. 12–16.

23. Buy the truth. Cf. our Lord's proverb in Matt. xiii. 44, and also Isa. lv. 1.

26. give me thine heart. This means nothing more than 'pay

And let thine eyes [a] delight in my ways.
For a whore is a deep ditch; 27
And a strange woman is a narrow pit.
Yea, she lieth in wait [b] as a robber, 28
And increaseth the treacherous among men.
Who hath [c] woe? who hath [d] sorrow? who hath contentions? 29
Who hath complaining? who hath wounds without cause?
Who hath [e] redness of eyes?
They that tarry long at the wine; 30

---

[a] Another reading is, *observe*
[b] Or, *as* for *a prey*
[c] Heb. *Oh!*
[d] Heb. *Alas!*
[e] Or, *darkness*

---

attention to my teaching.' Some have thought that the figure here introduced is that of Wisdom, as in chap. ix, and that she is contrasted with the 'evil woman' of the following verse; but there is no evidence of such a thing, and no need to suppose it.

delight in. The R. V. margin gives the rendering of the Hebrew margin, which is followed by many versions and editors, namely, 'observe.' Both meanings are good, but the second is more common in this book.

27. narrow pit. Perhaps rather 'well,' the straitness of which would make it very difficult to get out again if a man fell in. Probably the 'for' with which the verse opens is not original, but may be the insertion of an editor who wished to connect it closely with the preceding verse.

28. increaseth the treacherous. As this stands, it must mean that the adulteress is a great cause of the increase of sin. Some editors alter the text with the purpose of bringing it into closer connexion with the first clause, and then render 'she commits many acts of plunder against men'; but this is not necessary, as the word translated 'treacherous' can mean sinners in general, and, therefore, the meaning given above may stand.

29. woe . . . sorrow. As the margin shows, these two words are really interjections in Hebrew meaning respectively 'Oh' and 'Alas!' so that the questions are very dramatic. The following questions, of course, refer to the frequent quarrels and difficulties into which drunkenness brings a man.

redness. This is perhaps better translated 'dullness,' and refers to the well-known effect upon the eyes of constant indulgence in intoxicants.

They that go to [a] seek out mixed wine.
31 Look not thou upon the wine when it is red,
When it giveth its colour in the cup,
When it [b] goeth down smoothly:
32 At the last it biteth like a serpent,
And stingeth like [c] an adder.
33 Thine eyes shall behold [d] strange things,
And thine heart shall utter froward things.
34 Yea, thou shalt be as he that lieth down in the midst of
the sea,

---

[a] Or, *try* [b] Or, *moveth itself aright* [c] Or, *a basilisk*
[d] Or, *strange women*

---

30. seek out. Literally, 'test,' the probable reference being to the connoisseur, the man who prides himself in being well versed in brands of liquor.

mixed wine. See note on xx. 1, and also ix. 2.

31. giveth its colour. Better, 'gleameth.' The whole description is that of wine at its best, when its very beauty is attractive.

goeth down smoothly. Cf. Song of Songs vii. 9 and note. Some consider this clause to be a gloss introduced by some scribe. On the other hand, the suggestion has been made that we should take this clause with the one that follows, perhaps introducing other words from the parallel in the Song of Songs, and render 'At first it glides smoothly over lips and throat, but at last it biteth, &c.'

32. adder. The real character of the serpent thus translated is unknown. Elsewhere the word is translated in the R. V. 'basilisk,' in the A. V. 'cockatrice,' both of which creatures are, of course, fabulous, and the Hebrew word gives us no assistance in identification. From Isa. xiv. 22 it would appear that the word denoted a more venomous reptile than the ordinary serpent, but more than that we cannot learn.

33. strange things. Almost 'mad things,' the reference being to the distorted fancies of the drunkard. The 'strange women,' by which the margin renders it, arises from the fact that in the original the form is feminine, but the connexion between drunkenness and lust, though very real, does not appear to be here in question.

froward things is rather 'queer or distorted things,' a reference to the irresponsible speech of the drunkard.

34. midst of the sea. This, of course, means 'on the high seas,' not 'in the water itself,' as some have understood it.

Or as he that lieth upon the top of a mast.
They have stricken me, *shalt thou say*, and I was not hurt; 35
They have beaten me, and I felt it not:
When shall I awake? I will seek it yet again.
Be not thou envious against evil men, **24**
Neither desire to be with them:
For their heart studieth oppression, 2
And their lips talk of mischief.
Through wisdom is an house builded; 3

---

mast. The word only occurs here, and comes from a root which means 'to bind.' It is supposed, therefore, to be the look-out basket on the mast-head, but that is purely conjectural, and the Greek and other versions render either as 'a pilot' or 'sleeping sailor in a storm.' In that case there is no point in the comparison 'sleeping,' unless the reference be to the heavy sleep of drunkenness compared to the deep slumber of seamen indifferent to danger, but the real explanation is perhaps impossible to discover.

35. They have stricken me. This and the following clause refer to the drunkard's utterance on awaking from his drunken sleep, when he congratulates himself upon the happiness of his insensibility to blows, the infliction of which he remembers.

When shall I awake? This question seems to be the half-stupid utterance of returning consciousness, followed by the terrible resolve to return to his debauchery whenever he has the power.

I will seek it. The 'it' has no immediate antecedent, but obviously refers to his wine-drinking. Some editors insert the words in the previous question, 'When shall I awake from my wine?' but without any manuscript authority.

xxiv. **1. evil men.** The emphasis seems to lie upon conduct rather than character, or more properly, perhaps, character expressed in conduct.

2. oppression. This is the particular form of evil conduct selected, and probably reflects the condition of society at the time, in which robbery was the most prominent form of evil deeds.

3, 4. wisdom. The words in this and the following verse have reference to the practical aspect of wisdom as seen in the shrewdness and common sense of the man of affairs, and there is probably no reference to the metaphorical sense of house-building, as in Ps. cxxvii. 1, but to the literal building and furnishing of the home (cf. xxxi. 18-22; xiv. 1).

And by understanding it is established:
4 And by knowledge are the chambers filled
With all precious and pleasant riches.
5 A wise man [a] is strong;
Yea, a man of knowledge [b] increaseth might.
6 For by wise guidance thou shalt make thy war:
And in the multitude of counsellors there is [c] safety.
7 Wisdom is too high for a fool:
He openeth not his mouth in the gate.
8 He that deviseth to do evil,
Men shall call him a mischievous person.
9 The thought of [d] the foolish is sin:

---

[a] Heb. *is in strength.* [b] Heb. *strengtheneth might.*
[c] Or, *victory* [d] Heb. *foolishness.*

5. A wise man. This praise of the wise man's real strength is found again in xxi. 22, and Eccles. ix. 16. Toy would give this passage the form of the latter verse, and render both clauses by a comparison, thus, 'A wise man is better than the strong, and a man of knowledge than the mighty'; but the ordinary text gives very good sense.

6. For by wise guidance. This verse may form the germ of the parable in Luke xiv. 31, and, indeed, it is just possible that verses 3 to 6 underlie Luke xiv. 28-32. The second clause of the verse has already occurred in xi. 14.

7. too high. This meaning of 'unattainable' is got by a slight alteration of the Hebrew. The word that stands in the text must be translated 'corals' or precious stones of some kind, which does not seem at all applicable here, for silence is not generally reckoned the distinctive mark of a fool (see xviii. 6, 7), though the statement of xvii. 28 must not be forgotten. It is possible that the meaning of the verse may be something of this sort:—Since wisdom is out of a fool's reach, he is compelled to hold his tongue in the presence of wise counsellors. But the text is probably too corrupt to restore with certainty.

8, 9. There is a play on words in the Hebrew which the English translation cannot easily imitate. The comparison exists between the last word in verse 8 and the word rendered 'thought' in verse 9. The man that deviseth evil is called a 'master of evil thought,' and a word from the same root is employed to express 'thought' in the next verse. It might be

And the scorner is an abomination to men.
If thou faint in the day of adversity, 10
Thy strength is small.
Deliver them that are carried away unto death, 11
And those that are [a] ready to be slain [b] see that thou hold back.
If thou sayest, Behold, we knew not [c] this: 12
Doth not he that weigheth the hearts consider it?
And he that keepeth thy soul, doth not he know it?
And shall not he render to every man according to his work?

[a] Heb. *tottering to the slaughter.*
[b] Or, *forbear thou not to deliver*
[c] Or, *this man*

---

rendered somewhat thus, 'Men call him a master of mischief, and (in verse 9) sin is mischief,' for it is better to make sin the subject rather than the predicate of the clause.

10. If thou faint, &c. Here, again, the meaning is uncertain, probably because the text is not in the best condition. The Hebrew suggests that once more a play upon words is intended, and Toy proposes the rendering 'In the day of straits, strait is thy strength'; but it may be that a clause has fallen out of the original, and that some contrast between conduct in the time of prosperity and of adversity was originally meant.

11. see that thou hold back. This really means, as the marg. suggests, 'forbear not to deliver,' and the reference is either to men who are in danger of death at the hands of persecutors or of cruel oppression at the hand of illegal rulers. It is not possible to decide between these interpretations, but it is at all events certain that the general meaning is an injunction to deliver the oppressed.

12. we knew not this. The whole of the rest of the verse suggests that the verb should be in the singular, that is, 'I knew not this,' and it seems better to follow the LXX, and render it by the singular. It is a question whether 'this' refers to the subject mentioned in the previous verse. If it does, then the reference is not an exact one, for there is no strict antecedent. The Latin version has 'It is not in my power,' which gives a very good meaning. The excuse will then be a lack of ability which is not true, or rather which is only a cloak for laziness. Some think that the whole verse is a scribe's comment upon the preceding one.

13 My son, eat thou honey, for it is good;
And the honeycomb, which is sweet to thy taste:
14 So shalt thou know wisdom to be unto thy soul:
If thou hast found it, then shall there be a [a] reward,
And thy hope shall not be cut off.
15 Lay not wait, [b] O wicked man, against the [c] habitation of the righteous;
Spoil not his [d] resting place:
16 For a righteous man falleth seven times, and riseth up again:
But the wicked are overthrown by calamity.
17 Rejoice not when thine enemy falleth,
And let not thine heart be glad when he is overthrown:

---

[a] See ch. xxiii. 18. [b] Or, *as a wicked man*
[c] Or, *pasture* [d] Or, *fold*

---

13. eat thou honey. From xvi. 24 and Ps. cxix. 103, and elsewhere we learn that wise words were compared to honey, and here, apparently, the latter is used metaphorically for 'words of wisdom' (cf. xxv. 16 and Ecclus. xxiv. 20).

14. then shall there be a reward. This latter part of the clause is repeated from xxiii. 18, where see the note. Here the words are probably not original, but have been copied from the former passage, either as being, in the estimation of the editor, an appropriate conclusion, or because the words of the original have been lost.

15. O wicked man. This form of address seems out of place here, as the whole section consists of injunctions to the pupil of the wise, but it may probably be a later insertion. The form of counsel in the verse seems to indicate a period when there was a danger of popular uprising in a city, and may also be an indication of the lateness of the date of the passage.

16. seven times. This is, of course, a figurative number, indicating completion, as is often found in both the O. T. and the N. T. 'By calamity' may also be rendered 'in time of calamity.'

17. Rejoice not. This negative form of counsel approaches the positive form of Matt. v. 44, 'Love your enemies,' and may be another indication of our Lord's use of this book. (See the present writer's article in *D.C.G.*, vol. ii, on 'Our Lord as a Student of the O.T.')

Lest the Lord see it, and it displease him, 18
And he turn away his wrath from him.
Fret not thyself because of evil-doers; 19
Neither be thou envious at the wicked:
For there will be no [a] reward to the evil man; 20
The lamp of the wicked shall be put out.
My son, fear thou the Lord and the king: 21
And meddle not with them that are given to change:
For their calamity shall rise suddenly; 22
And who knoweth the destruction [b] of them both?

---

[a] See ch. xxiii. 18. [b] Or, *of their years*

18. from him: i. e. 'lest the Lord turn His anger from the wicked man to you.' The wicked man is certain to receive punishment at the hands of the Lord; but if the good man acts also wickedly, he in turn will not escape the Divine displeasure.

19. Cf. verse 1 of this chapter and Ps. xxxvii. 1, of which this seems to be a reminiscence, if not a quotation.

20. reward is literally 'end' (see xxiii. 18 and note). 'Future' is probably the best meaning here, the idea being that wickedness shuts a man off from all hope of participation in the blessing that lies ahead for the righteous.

The lamp of the wicked. See xiii. 9 and xx. 20 with notes.

21. My son. Probably these words are here the additions of scribes, as their position is unnatural in the original.

that are given to change. That is, apparently, the men that are fond of change, possibly 'revolutionaries,' against whom the wise man's pupil is here warned as dangerous characters. Frankenberg alters the text so as to read 'Do not behave yourself proudly in presence of either of them,' that is, of the Lord or of the king, so as to bring the verse into parallel form with the succeeding one. The LXX renders 'Do not disobey either of them,' so that there is some evidence that the original text has varied.

22. their calamity. Probably the calamity of destruction spoken of in the verse is that inflicted by God and by the king. This seems the most probable explanation. The translation of the margin, 'the destruction of their years,' is taken from the Syriac version, but is in itself an improbable and otherwise unparalleled phrase, and, if it were correct, must refer to the revolutionaries of verse 21.

23 These also are *sayings* of the wise.

To have respect of persons in judgement is not good.
24 He that saith unto the wicked, Thou art righteous;
Peoples shall curse him, nations shall abhor him:
25 But to them that rebuke *him* shall be delight,
And a good blessing shall come upon them.

The LXX has, from this point onwards, a different order of the chapters from the Hebrew (see Introd., p. 16). It also at this point introduces a few verses which have no equivalent in the original, but may be rendered as follows:—'A son, who regardeth the word of the Lord, shall be far from evil, for it is a protection to the man that receives it. Let no false word be spoken of the king, nor any false speech proceed from his lips. The tongue of the king is as a sword of the spirit, upon whomsoever it falleth, he shall be destroyed. If the king's wrath is kindled, he will slay men with his weapons; and destroy their bones, burning them as a fire; so that they are not even food for the young vultures.'

23. These also are sayings of the wise. This shows that the few verses which follow in this chapter may be regarded as an appendix to the collection which commenced at xxii. 17, and was probably added by a later editor, and may represent material that he had found prior to his final task of editing, and which he inserts here because of the similarity of the subjects dealt with to that contained in the preceding section. Some of the sentences are in prose and not in verse, as is common in the rest of the book, which may also point to a lateness of origin.

To have respect of persons. If this clause is taken by itself, it is a simple and clear statement of the evil of partiality, but some have tried to connect it with what follows, so as to give a poetic form to the original. In that case the words 'not good' have to be omitted, and the words translated, 'He who has respect of persons in judgement says to the wicked,' &c.

24. For the thought of this verse cf. xvii. 15.

25. rebuke. It is uncertain whether this word is to be taken absolutely, or whether 'him' should be inserted, as the R. V does. The former usage is without parallel in the book, but inasmuch as this is a late addition, that objection is not fatal. The best meaning seems given by understanding it as 'reproving' in general.

good blessing. Literally, 'a blessing of good,' that is, which consists in getting good fortune.

He [a] kisseth the lips 26
That giveth a right answer.
Prepare thy work without, 27
And make it ready for thee in the field;
And afterwards build thine house.
Be not a witness against thy neighbour without cause; 28
[b] And deceive not with thy lips.
Say not, I will do so to him as he hath done to me; 29
I will render to the man according to his work.
I went by the field of the slothful, 30
And by the vineyard of the man void of understanding;

[a] Or, *kisseth with the lips*

[b] Heb. *And wouldest thou deceive with thy lips?*

---

26. He kisseth the lips. These words seem to be equivalent to 'he is a true friend.' This is the only place in which kissing the lips is definitely mentioned in the O. T., the ordinary form of salutation being to kiss the cheek; but there may be a reference to the practice in Song of Songs iv. 11, and v. 1 (see notes on these passages). Herodotus tells us that the practice was a Persian one, and from that source the Hebrews may have borrowed it.

27. Prepare thy work. Cf. verses 3 and 4. Apparently the reference is to the careful agriculturist, who is advised to get his land well in order, and have a definite source of income from his crops and herds before he thinks of building a house and founding a home. It is the natural order of affairs that has to be followed by all settlers in new countries.

28. without cause. The LXX understands this as equivalent to false witness, but it is possible that the idea may rather be a warning against maliciousness, interpreting acts of a neighbour wrongfully, and making complaint against him, which is not properly justified.

And deceive not. As the margin shows, the Hebrew is in the form of a question, but the imperative better fits the context, and is supported by the LXX.

29. Say not, &c. Cf. xx. 22, and xxiii. 17. This verse forms a very interesting stepping-stone between the law of retaliation as contained, say, in Lev. xxiv. 19, 20, and the law of love given in Matt. v. 38-42.

30-34. Cf. vi. 6-11, the last two verses in each passage being identical.

31 And, lo, it was all grown over with thorns,
The face thereof was covered with [a] nettles,
And the stone wall thereof was broken down.
32 Then I beheld, and considered well:
I saw, and received instruction.
33 [b] *Yet* a little sleep, a little slumber,
A little folding of the hands to sleep:
34 So shall thy poverty come as a robber
And thy want as an armed man.

25 These also are proverbs of Solomon, which the men of Hezekiah king of Judah copied out.

2 It is the glory of God to conceal a thing:

---

[a] Or, *wild vetches* [b] See ch. vi. 10, 11.

30. understanding. The word might here be rendered common sense.

31. The triplet form of this verse is uncommon, but there seems no way of altering it without unduly violent conjecture. We cannot tell exactly what plants are meant by those here translated 'thorns and nettles.' The first only occurs in this passage, and the second probably means 'vetches.' Mr. Poste (see article 'Nettle,' *H. D. E.*) thinks that the word is a general one for 'brushwood,' and says that various species of thorn are to be found in all waste places in Palestine, and thinks *brushwood* would better express its meaning in all the Biblical passages.

stone wall: Cf. Isa. v. 5.

34. a robber. The Hebrew literally means a 'walker,' but a slight alteration gives the satisfactory meaning of the text.

xxv. **1. These also are proverbs.** On the general relation of this section with what has gone before, and as to the validity of the title, see the Introduction, p. 11.

copied out. More properly, 'transcribed.' The word in this sense is a very late one, and is itself indicative of the period at which this editorial note was written.

2. the glory of God. This is here seen in the mysterious ways of creation and Providence, and with the manner of the Divine working is contrasted the proper conduct of a king, which is to do his utmost to act openly in all matters of government. The word

But the glory of kings is to search out a matter.
The heaven for height, and the earth for depth, 3
And the heart of kings is unsearchable.
Take away the dross from the silver, 4
And there cometh forth a vessel for the finer:
Take away the wicked *from* before the king, 5
And his throne shall be established in righteousness.
[a] Put not thyself forward in the presence of the king 6
And stand not in the place of great men:
For better is it that it be said unto thee, Come up hither; 7

[a] Heb. *Glorify not thyself.*

---

is probably a protest against the underhand dealings of many Eastern courts.

3. unsearchable. This may be taken as the complementary truth to that stated in the preceding verse. The superior wisdom of kings is an accepted axiom of the writer, and there may also be a reference to the fact that even in the best and truest counsel there must necessarily be an element of secrecy.

4. the dross. Cf. xvii. 3 and xxvii. 21 for references to the processes of the workers in precious metal.

a vessel for the finer. Or 'for the smith.' The commentators in illustration of these words cite Exod. xxxii. 24, where Aaron says, 'I cast it into the fire, and there came out this calf.' But it is obvious that more is requisite for the production of a silver vessel than the mere work of the refiner; and if we are to read 'smith,' the verse will still remain a very abbreviated account indeed of the process of his art. It appears, therefore, that the reading of the LXX is preferable. It renders 'and it will be purified entirely pure,' depending, of course, upon a different form of the Hebrew text, but probably it here represents the correct form.

5. righteousness. For this phrase cf. xxiv. 16 and note, where contrarily 'by calamity' is read by the R. V., while it renders 'in righteousness' here. The phrase may even preferably be rendered 'by righteousness.'

6. Put not thyself forward. Here, again, we may have a reference to the period at which this section of the book is written, for the counsel is not only one of general seemliness of conduct, but of special guidance in circumstances of danger.

Than that thou shouldest be put lower in the presence of
the prince,
Whom thine eyes have seen.
8 Go not forth hastily to strive,
[a] Lest *thou know not* what to do in the end thereof,
When thy neighbour hath put thee to shame.
9 Debate thy cause with thy neighbour *himself*,
[b] And disclose not the secret of another:
10 Lest he that heareth it revile thee,
And thine infamy turn not away.
11 A word [c] fitly spoken

---

[a] Or, *Lest* it be said *in the end thereof, What wilt thou do? when &c.*

[b] Or, *But*

[c] Or, *in due season*

---

7. Come up hither. The scene is obviously that of a public feast in a palace, and has a close resemblance to the parable in Luke xiv. 8-11, and that passage is probably based on this.

Whom thine eyes have seen. These words form a very unsatisfactory conclusion to the verse, and it is much better to attach them, with many of the ancient versions and modern commentators, to the following verse, to which we now turn.

8. Go not forth. If we make the last clause of the previous verse the first clause of this one, as has been suggested, then we shall read, 'What thine eyes have seen, go not forth hastily to'—and then some word will be requisite signifying 'utter' or 'proclaim.' The Hebrew word, however, as read means 'strive,' but a slight alteration will give the requisite significance, and then the two clauses fit in most appropriately with the verses that follow.

Lest thou know not. The Hebrew word translated 'lest' seems impossible in the context, and many rather desperate attempts have been made to interpret it. The simplest way is to follow some recent scholars, and alter 'lest' to 'for,' and turn the whole into a question, 'For what wilt thou do in the end?' &c., the obvious reference being to the confusion that will fall upon the man, when he has disclosed what ought to have been kept secret, an injunction which is simply enforced in verses 9 and 10.

9. the secret of another. This might also be read 'the secret to another.'

11. A word fitly spoken. This is probably better expressed

Is *like* apples of gold in [a] baskets of silver
As [b] an earring of gold, and an ornament of fine gold, 12
So is a wise reprover upon an obedient ear.
As the cold of snow in the time of harvest, 13
So is a faithful messenger to them that send him;
For he refresheth the soul of his masters.
As clouds and wind without rain, 14
So is he that boasteth himself [c] of his gifts falsely.

---

[a] Or, *filigree work* [b] Or, *a nose-ring*
[c] Heb. *in a gift of falsehood.*

---

as 'a word in due season,' the meaning 'fitly' being rather an inference than a certainty. Cf. xv. 23. The famous comparison which follows is one of the most difficult clauses in the whole book. It is only necessary to look at the large number of interpretations found in any of the greater commentaries to discover how conjectural the rendering is. The one thing that is certain about it is that real gold must be meant, and not something like gold, so that all such translations as 'oranges,' and so on, must be put out of court. The word rendered 'baskets' when it occurs elsewhere means either 'carved work' or 'frescoes' (see Ecclus. xxii. 17), but no interpretation is satisfactory as giving any real illustration of the idea the verse expresses. Probably the thought is the beauty of an appropriate speech, but just what kind of beauty is described we must content ourselves without discovering. It seems most probable that the reference is to some peculiarly famous kind of jewellery, since the next verse quite clearly refers to that class of art.

12. earring. This may also mean 'nose-ring'; see xi. 22.

ornament. Better, 'necklace.' See Song of Songs vii. 1.

13. the cold of snow. It is the coldness that is the point of the comparison, not the snow, for a fall of snow in harvest would be detrimental (see xxvi. 1), and not an object of praise. The reference apparently is to the practice of rendering drinks cool by means of snow brought from the mountains, which is still done in the East.

For he refresheth. This third clause spoils the parallelism of the verse, and is so apparently an unnecessary explanatory gloss that we may put it down to a scribe.

14. boasteth himself of his gifts. Obviously, from the illustration employed, this means 'of the gifts he is about to give,' and is another illustration of the grim humour so frequently found in the book.

15 By long forbearing is a [a] ruler persuaded,
And a soft tongue breaketh the bone.
16 Hast thou found honey? eat so much as is sufficient for
thee;
Lest thou be filled therewith, and vomit it.
17 Let thy foot be seldom in thy neighbour's house;
Lest he be [b] weary of thee, and hate thee.
18 A man that beareth false witness against his neighbour
Is a maul, and a sword, and a sharp arrow.

---

[a] Or, *judge* [b] Heb. *full of thee.*

---

15. By long forbearing. Literally, the clause should be translated 'by slowness to anger is a prince or judge befooled,' but this does not seem to give any intelligible meaning, unless it is an extreme form of stating the truth, elsewhere expressed as 'a soft answer turning away wrath,' and so it is here said that the man of patient spirit outwits the machinations of the unjust judge or the tyrannous ruler. The same idea seems to be expressed by the second clause, which is certainly to be paralleled by xv. 1, while the strange metaphor may find an illustration in the proverbial expression about the continuous drop which wears away the stone.

16. Hast thou found honey? See xxiv. 13 and note. Here the danger of the cloying food causing nausea may be a metaphorical warning against rushing impetuously into learning, and so devouring it at first as to breed a disgust of it at a later time. The proverb may be taken as a general counsel toward moderation, not only in the luxuries, but in regard to all the goods of life. See Ecclus. xxxvii. 27-31.

17. Cf. Ecclus. xiii. 9, though the verse there has rather more worldly wisdom in it than this one.

18. A man that beareth false witness. Here, again, we have one of those frequent warnings against a sin which seems to have been a very common one amongst the Jews. The phraseology is that of the Decalogue, and its place in that primitive collection of laws shows how necessary the counsel was felt to be.

maul. This is the only place where the word occurs in the Hebrew Bible, and also the only place where it is so translated in the English version. It is sometimes spelt 'mall,' and denotes a large and heavy hammer, generally of wood, used for driving wedges or similar purposes. It may here refer to a club as a weapon of warfare, or as the weapon of defence carried by the

Confidence in an unfaithful man in time of trouble 19
Is *like* a broken tooth, and a foot out of joint.
As one that taketh off a garment in cold weather, *and as* 20
vinegar upon [a] nitre,

---

[a] Or, *soda*

Eastern shepherd. In this verse and the next the R. V. curiously, and unnecessarily, has followed the A. V. in inverting the proper order of the clauses. The picturesque illustrations should come first in each case, thus : 'A maul, &c., is a man,' and 'a broken tooth, &c., is confidence.'

19. Confidence in an unfaithful man. This is a mistranslation of the Hebrew, which should be rendered 'an unfaithful man's confidence,' that is, 'when trouble comes the evil man (i. e. the irreligious man) has no ground of hope,' or 'the ground of hope which he has is certain to play him false, as does a broken tooth or a sprained foot when you come to rely upon them.'

20. As one that taketh off a garment. There are many difficulties about this verse, and they begin with the first clause. As it stands, the meaning of the verb rendered 'taketh off' is uncertain. It usually means 'adorn,' and in the form which only occurs here might possibly mean 'take off.' But, whether it means 'to put on' or 'to take off,' it does not seem applicable to the case. To 'take off' a garment is only imprudent, but something more than that seems to be meant by the words which follow, while 'to adorn oneself' with a garment does not seem particularly reprehensible even in cold weather, unless it be supposed that stress is laid on the adornment rather than the utility. A much more radical treatment of the clause is probably the true solution. The letters are almost identical with those which form the last clause of the previous verse, and when they were written without any vowels, as was the practice, a scribe might easily have copied them twice over and at a later time some one have made the slight alterations that are requisite to get the present translation out of it. The best thing to do with it, therefore, is to omit the clause altogether and begin the verse with the next words.

as vinegar upon nitre. The word rendered nitre should really be 'natron,' which is practically equivalent to what we ordinarily call washing soda. The effect of vinegar poured upon this substance is, first of all to make it effervesce, and, secondly, to destroy its specific qualities. Neither of these effects seems very applicable in the present connexion, though some have supposed that the effervescence is taken as a figure of the irritation pro-

So is he that singeth songs to an heavy heart.
21 If [a] thine enemy be hungry, give him bread to eat;
And if he be thirsty, give him water to drink:
22 For thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head,
And the LORD shall reward thee.

[a] Heb. *he that hateth thee.*

---

duced by the action described. This seems rather far-fetched, and a solution seems to be discoverable in another quarter. The LXX renders 'as vinegar for a wound,' the first effect of which, of course, is to make it smart severely, and this may be the point of the parallel. We are told that the Egyptians use vinegar and natron as a cure for toothache. If we could suppose this to be the reference, we might then fancy that the whole teaching of the verse is that it is a wise and kindly thing to do to sing songs to a heavy heart, and is a remedy for grief and for the gnawing pains of sorrow. This is a very attractive solution of the problem, but it must be confessed that it has not been the ordinary one, and that a parallel passage in Ecclus. xxii. 6 rather supports the ordinary reading. It is the incongruity of mirthful songs in sorrowful surroundings that apparently strikes the writer, and we may illustrate the idea from the pathetic effect of the fool's song in the 'Yeomen of the Guard.' A very noteworthy use of the verse is that it suggested to Holman Hunt his striking picture entitled 'The Awakened Conscience.' He tells us, 'My desire was to show how the still small voice speaks to a human soul in the turmoil of life' (cf. *The Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood*, vol. i, p. 347).

21. thine enemy. This is, perhaps, even stronger than the original, which has 'he that hateth thee.'

bread to eat. The 'bread' and 'water' of the Hebrew are omitted from the LXX, as also in Paul's quotation from the passage in Rom. xii. 20. They may, therefore, possibly have been explanatory additions.

22. heap coals of fire. The usage of the phrase in Ps. cxl. 10, and later in several passages in Ecclesiasticus, e.g. xxxvi. 9, seems to indicate that the expression denotes vengeance; but there is a difficulty in so understanding it, since it would then seem that the counsel is to take vengeance upon him in a more sure and certain manner than by rougher methods; and the closing words of the verse, which promise the reward of the Lord, do not make it easier. The general explanation given is that such conduct will first cause the enemy burning shame, which will eventuate in the blessing of love; but this seems rather forced, and to be the

The north wind bringeth forth rain: 23
So doth a backbiting tongue an angry countenance.
[a] It is better to dwell in the corner of the housetop, 24
Than with a contentious woman in a wide house.
As cold waters to a [b] thirsty soul, 25
So is good news from a far country.
As a [c] troubled fountain, and a corrupted spring, 26
So is a righteous man that [d] giveth way before the wicked.

[a] See ch. xxi. 9.
[b] Or, *weary*
Heb. *trampled.*
[d] Or, *is moved*

---

outcome of later ideas. Whether such gracious vengeance and the high ethical quality it indicates was present to the mind of the writer is a little doubtful.

The north wind. The west wind (see Luke xii. 54) was generally supposed to be the harbinger of rain, but it may also come from the direction here named, and, again, the phrase may not be perfectly exact. The point of the comparison is that of the certain sequence of a particular effect upon a particular cause.

24. This is an exact repetition of xxi. 9.

25. a thirsty soul. This would be more accurately rendered 'a weary soul,' and the beauty of the comparison is obvious.

26. a troubled fountain. Literally, 'trampled' (see Ezek. xxxii. 2), from the practice of men and beasts entering the fountain and defiling it.

a corrupted spring. This may either mean that the water has been spoiled, as in the former case, or, more probably, since the word can be rendered 'ruined,' it designates a fountain whose surrounding wall has been broken down, and, the stones having fallen into the well, it is impossible any longer to reach the water.

giveth way before. This is generally understood to mean that the righteous man has been destroyed by the devices of the wicked, but such an interpretation would rather demand the picture of some beautiful and noble building that had fallen into ruin, and, therefore, the interpretation which sees in this a reference to moral failure is more probable. Lange quotes an interesting application of the proverb by Lord Bacon, who applies it to the legal decisions of a judge, and writes: 'One foul sentence doeth more hurt than many foul examples; for these do but corrupt the stream, the other corrupteth the fountain.'

27 It is not good to eat much honey:
[a] So *for men* to search out their own glory is *not* glory.
28 [b] He whose spirit is without restraint
Is *like* a city that is broken down and hath no wall.
26 As snow in summer, and as rain in harvest,
So honour is not seemly for a fool.
2 As the sparrow in her wandering, as the swallow in her flying,

---

[a] Or, *But* for men *to search out their own glory is glory* The Hebrew text is obscure.

[b] Or, *He that hath no rule over his spirit*

---

27. it is not good, &c. Cf. verse 16 above.

So for men. This clause is very difficult. The words 'for men' are introduced as an attempt at explanation, as is also the negative, which has no equivalent in Hebrew. By a slight change of the Hebrew the meaning is obtained 'to search out difficult things is glory'; but the reading is uncertain, and the meaning not very appropriate. Another alteration gives the meaning 'to search out difficult things is weariness,' which is in agreement with the teaching of Ecclesiastes, but has no parallel in Proverbs. Frankenberg ingeniously renders, 'therefore be sparing in complimentary speech,' which would involve a comparison of the nauseating effect of honey and flattery, but it is difficult to get this meaning satisfactorily from the existing Hebrew. Of the attempted translations, these here noted are the best, but, again, we have probably to confess that the original text is beyond our reconstruction with any certainty. As it stands, there is a play upon words in the original, well rendered by Plumptre, as follows: 'To search into weighty matters is itself a weight.'

28. He whose spirit. That is, the man without self-control. Here, again, our version needlessly inverts the order of the clauses. See note on verse 18 above.

xxvi. **1.** Cf. xxv. 13. Here the reference to unseasonable snow and rain are regarded as symbolical of the unsuitability of an incompetent person for high and important offices. During the harvest season in Palestine there is no rainfall; consequently, if such a thing should occur it would be quite abnormal. See 1 Sam. xii. 16–18.

2. wandering. Perhaps 'flitting' is a better word, the reference being to the quick and constant moving of the sparrow, as in the line of Catullus's famous poem:

'Sed circumsiliens modo huc modo illuc.'

So the curse that is causeless [a] lighteth not.
A whip for the horse, a bridle for the ass, 3
And a rod for the back of fools.
Answer not a fool according to his folly, 4
Lest thou also be like unto him.
Answer a fool according to his folly, 5
Lest he be wise in [b] his own conceit.
He that sendeth a message by the hand of a fool 6
Cutteth off *his own* feet, *and* drinketh in damage.

---

[a] Heb. *cometh not.* [b] Heb. *his own eyes.*

the curse. Here we have a reference to a very widespread belief among many peoples that curses have a kind of independent existence, and follow those against whom they are uttered until they strike them. (See Judges xvii. 2.) According to this verse the curses that are uttered without any reasonable cause have no power to hurt those against whom they are aimed. A later and purer faith did away with all possibility of cursing as a religious act (cf. Matt. v. 44; Rom. xii. 14). On the idea of the Divine cursing see Mal. ii. 2.

lighteth not. According to the Hebrew marg., this should be translated 'lighteth upon him.' The two words in Hebrew are very nearly alike, but the meaning suggested by the illustration in the former part of the verse is that the curse does not reach its object rather than that it returns upon the person who uttered it, though the latter idea is one familiar to folklore, as in the English proverb, 'Curses are like chickens; they come home to roost.'

3. whip . . . bridle. We may either suppose that the change in the words is for purely rhetorical purposes, or imagine that the whip was more appropriate for horses, while the gentler and more patient ass, the ordinary riding animal, could be sufficiently guided by the bridle. The point of the proverb is clear enough (cf. xix. 22).

4, 5. These verses form a complement one to the other, and Plumptre notices that the Pythagoreans had maxims of similar form. We are reminded in verse 4 of the saying of our Lord in Matt. vii. 6. Cf the line of M. Drayton:

'Fools as we met, so fools again we parted.'

6. As noted several times in the former chapter, our translation here inverts the order of the Hebrew clauses.

Cutteth off . . . feet. This is generally understood to mean the

7 The legs of the lame hang loose:
So is a parable in the mouth of fools.
8 [a] As a bag of gems in a heap of stones,

---

[a] Or, *As one that bindeth fast a stone in a sling*

feet of the man who sends the message; that is to say, that to send a fool is equivalent to sending no messenger at all; but the phrase is admittedly difficult to understand. Some would render it 'cuts off the legs of his messenger,' but the result and meaning is much the same.

drinketh in damage. This phrase is also difficult, since the Hebrew word means 'wrong wrought with violence,' and that is rather strong for the context. The metaphor 'to drink in violence' is likewise a curious one, but the general meaning is pretty obvious.

7. The legs of the lame. The translation of this line is very uncertain, seeing that the verb is not clear. It may either mean 'to draw up,' 'to take away,' or 'to hang loose,' and translations have been based on each one of these significations (see the A. V. for the third, and the LXX for the second, since it translates 'take away the power of locomotion from the lame'). Some have altered the text so as to make it a humorous proverb which compares the parable in the mouth of fools to the leaping of the lame. It seems that we must content ourselves with the general idea of the words, namely, that a fool can make no better use of a wise saying than a lame man of his limbs.

8. As a bag of gems. This first line is notoriously difficult to translate, because the words in the Hebrew are several of them very uncertain in meaning. Hence the translation of the A. V. and R. V. marg., 'As he who binds a stone in a sling,' is so very different. Let us take the translation of the text first. Even if the words may mean what they are here represented as meaning, there seems no appropriateness about the metaphor. What would be the effect of putting a bag of gems on a stoneheap? It could only mean a somewhat far-fetched metaphor for doing a foolish act, and that is the significance that is given to it. In a similar way is the rendering of the A. V. understood. A sling is meant to discharge stones, not to hold them, and so if a man binds a stone into a sling he destroys its purpose. Some translators, reading simply 'to fit a stone into a sling,' understand the meaning to be that just as swiftly as a stone leaves a sling does honour pass from a fool, so that to bestow honour upon him is useless. Cf. the English proverb, 'A fool's bolt is soon shot.' More far-fetched still is the translation of the Vulgate, based upon a late Hebrew tradition, that the reference here is to the casting

So is he that giveth honour to a fool.
As a thorn that goeth up into the hand of a drunkard, 9
So is a parable in the mouth of fools.
[a] *As* an archer that woundeth all, 10
So is he that hireth the fool and he that hireth them that pass by.

---

[a] Or, *A master worker formeth all things ; but he that hireth the fool is as one that hireth them that pass by* The Hebrew text is obscure.

---

of a stone upon the cairns that were sacred to Mercury. The comparison would then be with the foolishness of heathen superstition, but the explanation is probably too far-fetched to be likely. Perhaps the original text is corrupt, and we cannot now ascertain its original form.

9. goeth up. This is generally understood to mean 'pierces,' but the Hebrew word will not bear that meaning. Its real sense is 'growing,' but this, of course, is quite inappropriate in the connexion. Delitzsch, therefore, suggests, on the analogy of a late Hebrew construction, that the word may mean 'gets possession of,' so that the idea would then be 'like a drunken man who gets possession of a branch of a thorn-tree, so is a fool with a proverb.' He will do more damage to other people with it than even to himself. We may picture in our minds a drunken Irishman with a shillelagh. On the ordinary assumption that the reference is to the injury a man may do himself, cf. Ecclus. xix. 12.

10. This verse is probably the most obscure and difficult in the whole book, and it is certain that the original text must be corrupt. A literal translation of the Hebrew will show to the English reader better than anything else how little we have to build upon. 'Much produces (or wounds) all, and he who hires a fool and he who hires passers-by.' Further, the word rendered 'much' may also mean 'master,' and has by some been translated 'archer.' This is all that can be said with certainty about the verse, and the witness of the versions shows that from the very earliest times attempts at emendation have been made, for they are obviously based upon slightly altered forms of the Hebrew. Many of them are very forced, and cannot be justified by any rules of Hebrew grammar. Neither is their sense appropriate in itself, as may be seen from one specimen, namely, the Syriac, which, based upon the Greek, renders 'The flesh of fools suffers much, and the drunken man crosses the sea.' Amongst emendations those of Luther and Delitzsch are probably as good as any. The former renders 'A good master makes all right, but he who hires a

11 As a dog that returneth to his vomit,
So is a fool that repeateth his folly.
12 Seest thou a man wise in [a] his own conceit?
There is more hope of a fool than of him.
13 [b] The sluggard saith, There is a lion in the way;
A lion is in the streets.
14 *As* the door turneth upon its hinges,
So doth the sluggard upon his bed.
15 [c] The sluggard burieth his hand in the dish;
It wearieth him to bring it again to his mouth.
16 The sluggard is wiser in [a] his own conceit
Than seven men that can [d] render a reason.

[a] Heb. *his own eyes.*
[b] See ch. xxii. 13.
[c] See ch. xix. 24.
[d] Or, *answer discreetly*

---

bungler ruins the matter,' and the latter 'Much produces all (i. e. to him who hath shall be given), but the fool's hire and he who hires him pass away.' We must be content to leave the verse in its original obscurity, and follow the example of the wiser commentators, who content themselves without attempting to translate it.

11. This powerful, if inelegant, proverb is quoted in the N. T. in 2 Peter ii. 22 in a form that shows us it was a common popular saying, and Delitzsch produces evidence that the thought of it was familiar in Aramaic popular speech. The LXX adds a verse here which is identical with Ecclus. iv. 21, but out of place in this context.

12. This is the one verse in the book, with the single exception of xxix. 20, which answers in form to this, where the fool is regarded as in any way giving us ground for hope concerning himself. The verse is quoted by Bunyan in his description of Ignorance.

13. Cf. xxii. 13, and the note there. Whenever the sluggard is introduced into the Proverbs we are immediately in an atmosphere of humorous portraiture.

14. The lazy man gets no further than the door, which always seems to offer the hope of going further, but continually returns upon itself.

15. Cf. xix. 24, and note there.

16. render a reason. The translation of the margin, 'answer discreetly,' better expresses the sense of the original.

[a] He that passeth by, *and* vexeth himself with strife 17
belonging not to him,
Is *like* one that taketh a dog by the ears.
As a madman who casteth firebrands, 18
Arrows, and death;
So is the man that deceiveth his neighbour, 19
And saith, Am not I in sport?
For lack of wood the fire goeth out: 20
And where there is no whisperer, contention ceaseth.
As coals are to hot embers, and wood to fire; 21
So is a contentious man to inflame strife.
[b] The words of a whisperer are as dainty morsels, 22
And they go down into the innermost parts of the
belly.

---

[a] Or, *He that vexeth himself . . . is* like *one that taketh a passing dog &c.*
[b] See ch. xviii. 8.

---

17. Again in this verse there is an inversion of the clauses of the original.

He that passeth by. These words, which are represented by an adjective in the original, are probably an addition to the text. When retained they can apply either to the man or to the dog, but in neither case have they much appropriateness, and the full meaning of the verse is even more clear without them.

18, 19. These verses do not, perhaps, refer so much to what we call practical joking as to some false tale told about a neighbour, not maliciously, but thoughtlessly. Cf. the well-known saying 'More evil is wrought by want of thought,' &c.

20, 21. Like verses 4 and 5, these are complements one of another, and their comparisons are very striking and significant.

As coals are to hot embers. This gives, of course, a very good meaning in itself, namely, that added fuel increases the fierceness of the heat, but by a slight alteration of the Hebrew the word 'bellows' can be read, which, of course, gives also an excellent meaning. There does not appear, however, to be sufficient reason to make the change.

22. Cf. xviii. 8, of which this is an exact repetition.

23 Fervent lips and a wicked heart
Are *like* an earthen vessel overlaid with silver dross.
24 He that hateth dissembleth with his lips,
But he layeth up deceit within him:
25 When he speaketh fair, believe him not;
For there are seven abominations in his heart:
26 Though *his* hatred cover itself with guile,
His wickedness shall be openly shewed before the congregation.
27 Whoso diggeth a pit shall fall therein:

23-25. These verses have been thus paraphrased by one of the early Scottish poets:

> 'Ane fals intent under ane fair pretence,
> Hes causit mony innocent for to de,
> Greit folie is to gif ower sone credence,
> To all that speikis fairlie unto thee.
> Ane silken tongue, ane hart of crueltie,
> Smytis more sore than ony schot of arrow.'
> HENRYSON.

23. Here, as we have noticed frequently in recent chapters, the order of the original clauses is inverted in our translation.

Fervent. By the change of a single letter in the original we obtain the meaning 'flattering,' which is probably better.

silver dross. This seems to mean the refuse left after the process of refining is over, with which, apparently, common pottery was glazed over to give it the appearance of silver. In this way a very excellent parallel is obtained to the inherent falseness of the specious flatterer.

24. layeth up. More accurately 'nourisheth.'

25. seven. This number is doubtless used here as an equivalent for completeness or fullness, that is, 'his heart is full of all manner of evil.' It is this verse that gives the origin of Bunyan's town of Fairspeech, from which Mr. Byends came.

26. congregation. The word here probably applies to the jurisdiction of any one civil community, which in the later period of Judaism had in each place authority for administering justice.

27. Whoso diggeth. The thought of this verse is perfectly clear, but for the striking parallel see Ecclus. xxvii. 25-29, and Delitzsch quotes French and German proverbs that are identical with the first clause. Cf. also Eccles. x. 9.

And he that rolleth a stone, it shall return upon him.
A lying tongue hateth those whom it hath [a] wounded; 28
And a flattering mouth worketh ruin.
Boast not thyself of to-morrow; 27
For thou knowest not what a day may bring forth.
Let another man praise thee, and not thine own mouth; 2
A stranger, and not thine own lips.
A stone is heavy, and the sand weighty; 3
But a fool's vexation is heavier than them both.
Wrath is cruel, and anger is [b] outrageous; 4
But who is able to stand before jealousy?
Better is open rebuke 5
Than love that is hidden.

[a] Heb. *crushed.* [b] Heb. *a flood.*

---

28. whom it hath wounded. This rendering is not probable. In fact, as it stands it is almost certainly incorrect. The adjective thus rendered really means 'oppressed,' and to say that a liar hates the oppressed is not very clear. Many commentators have followed the R. V., interpreting it as hating the people whose ruin has been wrought by it. Probably we must alter the text so as to read 'brings about ruin,' on the analogy of the second clause. The LXX, perhaps following some other original, reads 'hateth truth,' and others have suggested 'deceives its possessor,' but the conjecture already given seems most likely.

xxvii. **1.** Cf. Jas. iv. 13-14.

2. Delitzsch quotes appropriately the German proverb, 'Eigenlob stinkt, Freundes Lob hinkt, fremdes Lob klingt,' which we might translate, 'The praise of oneself is nausea, the praise of a friend lameness, but the praise of a stranger music.'

3. vexation. More accurately 'wrath.' The point of the comparison is difficult to understand unless it means that the wrath of a fool is harder to bear than are the loads mentioned in the previous clause. Toy thinks the word is so inappropriate that it should be omitted altogether, and considers that, following the analogy of Ecclus. xxii. 14, 15, we are to regard the fool himself as the thing too heavy to be borne.

4. jealousy. Cf. S. of S. viii. 6.

5. love that is hidden. Or, by a change of vowels, 'love that hides.' The reference is not quite clear, but probably it is to love

6 Faithful are the wounds of a friend:
But the kisses of an enemy are profuse.
7 The full soul [a] loatheth an honeycomb:
But to the hungry soul every bitter thing is sweet.
8 As a bird that wandereth from her nest,
So is a man that wandereth from his place.
9 Ointment and perfume rejoice the heart:
So doth the sweetness of a man's friend *that cometh* of
hearty counsel.

[a] Heb. *trampleth upon.*

---

which, from whatever reason, does not declare itself at the moment of need. Love which has too much fear to rebuke is regarded as worthless. We may call to mind the saying of 1 John iv. 18, 'He that feareth is not made perfect in love.'

6. profuse. This is the generally accepted translation of modern commentators, but it is not really a certain one. The A. V. rendering 'deceitful,' though appropriate, requires a change of text. It is a true description of the insincere greeting that pretends to be affection, as was the kiss of Judas (see Matt. xxvi. 49), and reminds us of the lines:

'There's the traitor's kiss of gold,
Like the serpent's clammy fold.'

loatheth. Literally, 'tramples on,' that is, rejects with scorn.

7. the hungry soul. Cf. the common proverb, 'Hunger is the best sauce.' Whether there is any reference here, in the secondary sense, to praise, which the man, who seldom gets it, eagerly drinks in, is uncertain.

8. place. This would be better rendered by the English word 'home,' and we may think of many popular proverbs in this connexion, e. g. 'East, west, home's best,' and there is a certain interest and pathos in the thought that our own favourite song, 'Home, sweet home,' found its equivalent long ago in Judaism. We may compare further the beautiful imagery of Ps. cxxxviii.

9. For the pleasure derived from ointment and perfume see Song of Sol. iv. 10, &c., and references there. The second clause of the verse is unintelligible as it stands, and there must be some alteration of the text to give an intelligible meaning. The simplest change seems to be one which enables us to read 'so doth sweetness of counsel strengthen the heart.' This also has the advantage of preserving the figure of fragrance.

Thine own friend, and thy father's friend, forsake not; 10
And go not to thy brother's house in the day of thy calamity:
Better is a neighbour that is near than a brother far off.
My son, be wise, and make my heart glad, 11
That I may answer him that reproacheth me.
[a] A prudent man seeth the evil, *and* hideth himself: 12
But the simple pass on, *and* suffer for it.
[b] Take his garment that is surety for a stranger; 13
And hold him in pledge *that is surety* for a strange woman.
He that blesseth his friend with a loud voice, rising early in the morning, 14
It shall be counted a curse to him.

[a] See ch. xxii. 3. [b] See ch. xx. 16.

---

10. Thine own friend, &c. This line speaks only of one person, not of two, as the form might suggest. It will be noticed that the verse consists of three clauses, which is quite against the whole manner of this book. See notes on vi. 22. It is possible to make a fairly good connexion between the first and the third lines, if we omit the second altogether. The second clause as it stands is a distinct contradiction of xvii. 17; and even if we were to omit the negative, as has been suggested, the connexion would not be good, unless we follow Bickell in supposing the brother of the second clause to be identical with the friend of the first. It seems that either the second clause is the insertion of some embittered scribe, or that the second or third clause is half of a verse, the former part of which is lost.

11. On the thought of this verse see Ecclus. xxx. 1–6. The appeal is for the pupil to maintain the character of the teaching he has received, in order that no legitimate reproach may be directed against the teacher.

12. This is a repetition of xxii. 3.

13. This is a repetition of xiii. 16, where see note.

14. rising early in the morning. This is probably an unwarranted addition, as it adds nothing to the significance of the words, and spoils the metrical form. The point of the verse is a warning against insincerity, as in xxvi. 25. Praise that is too loudly uttered carries its condemnation on its face.

15 A continual dropping in a very rainy day
And a contentious woman are alike:
16 He that would [a] restrain her [b] restraineth the wind,
And [c] his right hand encountereth oil.
17 Iron sharpeneth iron;
So a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend.
18 Whoso keepeth the fig tree shall eat the fruit thereof;
And he that waiteth on his master shall be honoured.

[a] Heb. *hide.* [b] Heb. *hideth.*

[c] Or, *the ointment of his right hand bewrayeth itself*

---

15. Cf. xix. 13. The discomfort here suggested is that of a leaking roof. The LXX seems to have paraphrased the original, and perhaps to have had a somewhat different text as well, or to have misunderstood some of the Hebrew words. It renders, 'Drops drive a man on a wintry day out of doors, so a railing woman drives him out of his own house.'

16. He that would restrain, &c. Once more we have encountered a verse the original of which conveys no sense. Our version follows the Latin, which evidently regarded this verse as in some way connected with the subject of the preceding one. There is, however, nothing to indicate such connexion, and the LXX's translation is a desperate attempt to make sense of what is quite obscure. It seems perfectly impossible to the English reader that such a translation could be derived from the same text, but it is a fact that, with the very slightest manipulation, the Hebrew can thus be rendered. The LXX runs: 'The north wind is a severe wind, but by its name is termed auspicious.' One supposes that the reference is to the well-known Greek habit of calling unpleasant things by pleasant names (cf. Euxine and Eumenides). We must conclude that with our present knowledge the verse is inexplicable.

17. Iron. This proverb is very frequently employed in English, and its meaning is clear, namely, that through social intercourse men's wits are sharpened; as Lord Bacon puts it, 'Conference maketh a ready man.' Ewald understood it as referring to the magnetic attraction of iron as a symbol of friendly fellowship and union, but the Hebrew can hardly bear that meaning.

18. Whoso keepeth. Cf. Song of Sol. viii. 12 and 2 Tim. ii. 6. The point of the proverb is that just as surely as the careful husbandman will reap the reward of his attention to the fig-tree, so will the diligent servant be rewarded by his master.

[a] As in water face *answereth* to face, 19
So the heart of man to man.
[b] Sheol and Abaddon are never satisfied; 20
And the eyes of man are never satisfied.
The fining pot is for silver, and the furnace for gold, 21
And a man is *tried* by [c] his praise.
Though thou shouldest bray a fool in a mortar with a 22
pestle among bruised corn,
Yet will not his foolishness depart from him.

---

[a] Or, *As water* sheweth *face to face, so the heart* sheweth *man to man.*

[b] See ch. XV. 11.

[c] Or, *that which he praiseth* Or, *that whereof he boasteth*

---

19. As in water. The words 'in water' probably arise from a misreading of the Hebrew, and the more correct reading is probably just 'as face answers to face, so does mind to mind.' The majority of commentators take the point of comparison to be the similarity, but others, mindful of the diversities of the human countenance, give this proverb the same sense as the familiar English one, 'Many men, many minds.'

Sheol and Abaddon. On these names see note on xv. 11, and for the idea of this verse see xxx. 16. For a reference to the desire of the eye see Eccles. i. 8, ii. 10, iv. 8. The LXX here adds another verse, which may be rendered, 'An abomination to the Lord is he who fixes his eyes, and the uninstructed are unrestrained in speech.' This is probably an addition by some scribe who introduces another proverb that has to do with eyes.

21. by his praise. The original meaning of this phrase is difficult to recover. It is frequently understood of the reputation which a man acquires at the hand of his fellows, that is to say, that public opinion is after all roughly just, and that a man may be judged in accordance with the general estimate formed of him by his fellow citizens. Others understand it of the way in which a man bears praise, whether it makes him more or less vain. But a third and very excellent sense is that given by the R. V. margin, namely, that he is tested by the things which he praises, that is to say, that we get an excellent index of character from the subjects and men which evoke any man's highest eulogies. The LXX, again, has an addition here of a verse which represents a common idea in the book, namely, 'the heart of the transgressor seeks evil, but the upright heart seeks knowledge.'

22. in a mortar. There is some difficulty about this word,

23 Be thou diligent to know the state of thy flocks,
And look well to thy herds:
24 For riches are not for ever;
And doth the crown endure unto all generations?
25 The [a] hay is carried, and the tender grass sheweth itself,

[a] Heb. *grass*.

---

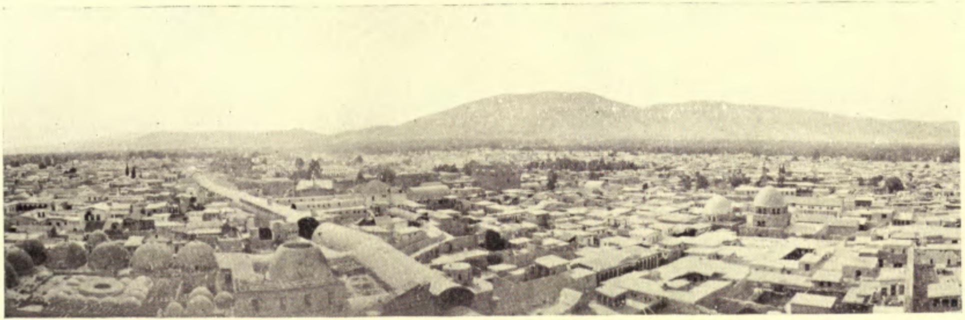
as Nestle and others consider it may mean 'a refining pot.' Others have supposed that the words 'with a pestle among bruised corn' should be omitted as an obvious gloss, but a note by Mr. Mackie in the *Expository Times* (vol. viii, p. 521) shows that the practice is quite intelligible, as he describes a dish, known in Syria as 'kibbeh,' in which minced mutton is pounded in a mortar for an hour, and then bruised wheat is added and the pounding process is continued till the meat and grain become a uniform, indistinguishable pulp.' Commenting upon this verse, he further says, 'The fool is the pounded mutton, and after the pestle and mortar, as education and enviroment, have done their best, the tiniest shred will still have all the characteristics of the mass.' This seems a very natural and excellent explanation of the passage. According to one Greek version, what is spoken of is the beating up of a mass of soft fruits, such as olives, figs, &c., but even then the metaphor is the same. The LXX has a quite different rendering, namely, 'Though thou scourge a fool, disgracing him in the council,' which must have arisen from a misreading of the present Hebrew, or from a different original. Cheyne thinks that the Greek is a conjectural paraphrase of the words 'though thou scourge a fool in the midst of insults,' or otherwise, 'in the midst of his associates,' but such conjectures are too uncertain to base a translation upon them.

From verses 23 to 27 we have a short agricultural treatise, a kind of Hebrew *Georgic* after the manner of some of the Greek and Latin poets. They may be a selection of gnomic sayings familiar among agriculturists.

23. herds. From the context it is apparent that the thought of the writer is confined to sheep and goats, and not to larger cattle. See Ecclus. vii. 22.

24. crown. This word is probably wrong, as it does not make a good parallel to the thought of the first clause of the verse, and is also quite inappropriate to the present context. A slight variation of the Hebrew gives the excellent meaning 'wealth.' The LXX varies the sense somewhat, but retains the general idea. It reads 'power and strength do not remain to a man for ever, nor are they handed on from generation to generation.'

25. This verse is better closely connected with the verse that



Damascus, from Minaret of Great Mosque

And the herbs of the mountains are gathered in.
The lambs are for thy clothing, 26
And the goats are the price of the field:
And *there will be* goats' milk enough for thy food, for the 27
food of thy household;
And maintenance for thy maidens.

The wicked flee when no man pursueth: **28**
But the righteous are bold as a lion.
For the transgression of a land many are the princes 2
thereof:

---

follows. It should, therefore, be begun with some such word as 'when,' ended with a comma, and verse **26** begun with a correlative conjunction such as 'then.'

tender grass. This is the aftermath or second crop of hay.

herbs of the mountains. This describes the pastures of the uplands, which would naturally be mown later than the grass-lands of the valleys.

26. for thy clothing. This refers either to the shearing of the lambs and the making of cloth out of their wool (cf. xxxi. 13 and 19), or to the sale of the animals, the price of which will buy clothing.

the price of the field. This clearly refers to the sale of the flocks in order to purchase extra land (cf. xxxi. 16).

27. goats' milk. Cf. Deut. xxxii. 13, 14 for this article of diet.

for the food of thy household. This clause is omitted by the LXX, and some editors follow it here, considering it to have arisen from reading the previous word in the Hebrew twice over (cf. xxxi. 15).

xxviii. **1. The wicked flee.** Cf. *Hamlet*, 'Conscience doth make cowards of us all.' Cf. also for both clauses the lines in *Henry VI*:

> 'Thrice is he armed that hath his quarrel just;
> And he but naked, though locked up in steel,
> Whose conscience with injustice is corrupted.'

2. For the transgression of a land. This is to be understood as a statement that, owing to the evil conduct of a people, they have to suffer from the instability and inconvenience of a frequent change of rulers, and Wildeboer appropriately cites Northern Israel as a good example. If we translate 'by' instead of 'for,'

But by [a] men of understanding *and* knowledge the state
thereof shall be prolonged.
3 A needy man that oppresseth the poor
Is *like* a sweeping rain [b] which leaveth no food.
4 They that forsake the law praise the wicked:
But such as keep the law contend with them.
5 Evil men understand not judgement:
But they that seek the LORD understand all things.
6 [c] Better is the poor that walketh in his integrity,

---

[a] Or, *a man* [b] Heb. *without food.* [c] See ch. xix. 1.

---

it will then mean that this state of affairs is the natural result of the evil of the people. The alteration of one letter changes 'princes' into 'enemies,' or 'misfortunes,' both of which words would give good sense.

But by men. This may also, as the margin shows, be singular, that is, 'by a man.'

the state. This can also be translated 'right,' which gives a very excellent meaning.

3. A needy man. Though this is the correct translation of the Hebrew text, it is hardly possible that the latter can be accurate. Some such expression as 'a wicked man,' or, as some read, 'a ruler,' is requisite to give appropriate sense. The metaphor of the sweeping rain is a very forcible one. Some have tried to explain the words as they stand, supposing it to refer to a needy employer or owner who crushes the poor in order to make his own profit out of them; but it is doubtful whether that idea is appropriate to the circumstances of the time.

4. They that forsake the law. The only question is whether the term 'law' here refers to the Mosaic code, or to the system of ethical teaching so often referred to in this book. If the former is meant, then these words point to the Jews who during the Greek period apostatized, and in that sense may be said to praise the wicked, because they approved of their manner of worship. It is probable, however, that the second meaning is to be preferred, which will simply be equivalent to saying that to neglect the teaching of the sages is to take the part of 'fools.'

5. all things. The reference is more probably to be confined to judgement in the first clause, and the words would be better translated 'understand it perfectly' (see Ps. cxix. 99–102, and John vii. 17).

6. perverse in his ways. The margin preserves the literal

Than he that is [a] perverse in *his* ways, though he be rich.
Whoso keepeth the law is a wise son : 7
But he that is a companion of gluttonous men shameth his father.
He that augmenteth his substance by usury and increase, 8
Gathereth it for him that hath pity on the poor.
He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, 9
Even his prayer is an abomination.
Whoso causeth the upright to go astray in an evil way, 10
He shall fall himself into his own pit :
But the perfect shall inherit good.
The rich man is wise in [b] his own conceit ; 11

[a] Heb. *perverse of two ways.*

[b] Heb. *his own eyes.*

---

translation of the Hebrew, namely, 'perverse of two ways,' but a change of the vowel gives the plural, as in the text.

7. gluttonous men. Probably more generally 'profligates' (cf. xxiii. 20, 21).

8. by usury. Better, 'by interest,' the R.V. here retaining the old English term. For Hebrew laws against taking of interest see Exod. xxii. 25 ; Lev. xxv. 35–37. In later Judaism the law was made even more exacting. This verse says that the taker of interest will defeat his own ends, because the money so acquired will pass from him into the hand of the benevolent and generous-hearted man. Of course the conditions of life alter the whole problem, and nothing in the humane directions of the O. T. touches the legitimate charge for loans of money that is customary in business transactions. For Ruskin's strongly idealistic views on the subject see *Fors Clavigera*, Letter 68, *The Crown of Wild Olive*, and *Munera Pulveris.*

9. Cf. xv. 8. The same ambiguity inheres in the word 'law' in this verse as in verse 4 above, but again the probability is in favour of the reference being to the instruction of the wise.

10. into his own pit. Cf. xxvi. 27.

But the perfect. These words appear either to be a note of addition by some scribe or editor, which mar the poetic form of the verse and add nothing to its thought, or they are the misplaced half of some proverb, the corresponding piece of which is lost.

11. The rich man. Cf. xviii. 11. The sympathy of the writer with the poor is shown here, as frequently throughout the book. Cf. also Eccles. ix. 15.

But the poor that hath understanding searcheth him out.
12 When the righteous triumph, there is great glory:
But when the wicked rise, men [a] hide themselves.
13 He that covereth his transgressions shall not prosper:
But whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall obtain mercy.
14 Happy is the man that feareth alway:
But he that hardeneth his heart shall fall into [b] mischief.
15 *As* a roaring lion, and a ranging bear;
So is a wicked ruler over a poor people.
16 [c] The prince that lacketh understanding is also a great oppressor:

[a] Heb. *must be searched for.* [b] Or, *calamity*

[c] Or, *O prince that lackest understanding and art a great oppressor, he &c.*

---

12. The general idea of this verse is found again in verse 28 of this chapter, which may well be taken as an explanatory comment upon this one.

hide themselves. This is probably as good a meaning as can be obtained for the original, though some editors alter the text so as to make it read 'tremble.'

13. whoso confesseth. Here we have very high teaching indeed upon confession and repentance (cf. Hosea xiv. 2-4, and the words in which both John the Baptist (see Luke iii. 8) and our Lord made the keynote of their respective ministries).

14. feareth. Not 'reverences,' but 'is in dread of,' the reference probably being to punishment (cf. 1 Peter i. 17).

mischief. Read rather, with the margin, 'a calamity.'

15. a ranging bear. The alteration of one letter in the Hebrew would make this read 'a bear robbed of her whelp' (see xvii. 12), which is very appropriate, and probably correct.

poor people. There does not seem any special appropriateness in the epithet 'poor' here, except to show the writer's sympathy with the poor or, perhaps, it is descriptive of the actual condition which he had in mind, and that the poverty added to the harshness of the tyranny, as has been so often the case in Russia.

16. The prince. Probably this word is out of place, and we should simply read, 'He who is a great oppressor lacketh under-

But he that hateth covetousness shall prolong his days.
A man that is laden with the blood of any person 17
Shall flee unto the pit; let no man stay him.
Whoso walketh uprightly shall be delivered: 18
But [a] he that is perverse in *his* ways shall fall at once.
[b] He that tilleth his land shall have plenty of bread: 19
But he that followeth after vain *persons* shall have poverty enough.
A faithful man shall abound with blessings: 20

---

[a] Or, *he that walketh perversely in two ways* [b] See ch. xii. 11.

---

standing.' The word 'prince' may have been introduced from the preceding verse.

17. laden with the blood. What these words mean it is almost impossible to tell. Some interpreters refer them to the man who oppresses the poor; but there would be no sense in saying that such a man was fleeing to the pit, in the sense of the grave; and if he were, he would be so unpopular that there would be no need to forbid men to prevent him from so doing. Others have understood it of the ceaseless remorse of the murderer, but, apart from the fact that it is almost impossible to give the Hebrew this significance, it is also difficult to give any satisfactory explanation of the counsel not to stay him. Delitzsch supposes it refers to the impossibility of helping him in such a case. There can be no real deliverance until he has made his peace with God. All such interpretations, however, are unsatisfactory, and it is better to regard it as being in some way a corrupted text that originally had some reference to the crime of murder, but is now unintelligible. Toy regards it as probably being an extract from a law book that has got in here by mistake.

18. perverse in his ways. See note on verse 6 above.

at once. This translation is very doubtful, nor is it very satisfactory. By an alteration of the text it has been made to mean 'into a pit,' but it is probably better to omit the word altogether.

19. This verse is a slight variation of xii. 11, where see note. The contrast between bread and poverty is more obvious than that of the earlier verse.

20. A faithful man, that is, one who is trustworthy in carrying out all the engagements into which he enters.

blessings. It is not possible to confine this either to the results that come to himself through such honourable dealings, or to the good that he is able to do to others thereby.

But he that maketh haste to be rich shall not be unpunished.
21 To have respect of persons is not good:
[a] Neither that a man should transgress for a piece of bread.
22 He that hath an evil eye hasteth after riches,
And knoweth not that want shall come upon him.
23 He that rebuketh a man shall afterward find more favour
Than he that flattereth with the tongue.
24 Whoso robbeth his father or his mother, and saith, It is no transgression;

---

[a] Or, *For a piece of bread a man will transgress*

unpunished. The probable implication is that the love of gain will lead him into devious courses (see 1 Tim. vi. 9, 10), and that through these he will meet punishment at the hand of God and men.

21. To have respect of persons. Cf. for this clause xxiii. 5 and xxiv. 23.

Neither that a man, &c. This should probably be translated without any connective, as the clause is apparently independent of the former one. The majority of commentators attempt to link the two together by supposing that the reference in both cases is to bribery in courts of law, and that the phrase 'a piece of bread' is the equivalent for a small bribe. It seems, however, more probable that the second clause refers to the temptations attending poverty (see xi. 26), and that it belongs to some other proverb, the first half of which is lost, and that it has been wrongly attached to the previous clause.

22. an evil eye. Cf. xxiii. 6 and note. The phrase is equivalent to 'avaricious.' For the contrast of the thought here see xi. 25.

23. He that rebuketh. On the general thought of this verse see xxv. 12 and xxvii. 5, 6.

afterward. This word has probably been wrongly introduced into the Hebrew, because in order to make this translation possible the word has had to be altered, the literal meaning of the Hebrew as it stands being 'after me,' which can only mean 'in accordance with my precepts,' which is scarcely probable.

24. Whoso robbeth his father. Very probably the thought of this verse lies at the back of the saying of Jesus recorded in Mark vii. 11, 12. It is possible that the words 'and saith it is no transgression' are an explanatory note introduced by some scribe, as they destroy the metrical form of the verse, and are certainly not essential to its clear meaning.

The same is the companion of a destroyer.
He that is of a greedy spirit stirreth up strife: 25
But he that putteth his trust in the LORD shall be made fat.
He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool: 26
But whoso walketh wisely, he shall be delivered.
He that giveth unto the poor shall not lack: 27
But he that hideth his eyes shall have many a curse.
When the wicked rise, men hide themselves: 28
But when they perish, the righteous increase.
He that being often reproved hardeneth his neck 29
Shall suddenly be broken, and that without remedy.
When the righteous [a] are increased, the people rejoice: 2
But when a wicked man beareth rule, the people sigh.
Whoso loveth wisdom rejoiceth his father: 3

[a] Or, *are in authority*

---

25. of a greedy spirit, that is, 'a grasping disposition,' which temper, of course, readily generates ill-feeling amongst other people.

shall be made fat. This is a literal translation of the Hebrew, and, of course, means 'shall prosper.'

26. trusteth in his own heart, that is, 'trusts in himself,' 'follows the devices of his own desires.' Cf. the trenchant note of Bunyan in the dialogue between Ignorance and Christian.

27. he that hideth his eyes, that is, 'disregards or does not pay attention to the suffering that is before his eyes.' (Cf. Ecclus. iv. 5, 6; Luke vi. 30–36.) On the thought of the curse see note on xxvi. 2.

28. Cf. verse 12 of this chapter, and the note there.

xxix. **1. hardeneth his neck.** The word 'stiff-necked' is often used in the Bible as an equivalent for obstinate; see, for example, Exod. xxxii. 9, &c., the figure being taken from oxen used in ploughing and other agricultural processes. The second clause of this verse is practically the same as that of vi. 15.

2. Cf. xxviii. 12.

are increased. The alteration of one letter in the Hebrew gives the meaning 'rule' (see margin), which is probably correct.

3. The thought of this verse echoes many passages in the early part of the book, where one finds the effect of wisdom in giving

But he that keepeth company with harlots wasteth *his*
substance.
4 The king by judgement establisheth the land:
But [a] he that exacteth gifts overthroweth it.
5 A man that flattereth his neighbour
Spreadeth a net for his steps.
6 In the transgression of an evil man there is a snare:
But the righteous doth sing and rejoice.
7 The righteous taketh knowledge of the cause of the poor
The wicked [b] hath not understanding to know *it*.

[a] Or, *he that imposeth tribute* Heb. *a man of offerings.*
[b] Or, *understandeth not knowledge*

---

gladness to a man's parents frequently mentioned, and where also sensuality is stated to be the marked contrast of wisdom. The closing clause of the verse strongly suggests Luke xv. 13–30, and one wonders whether this proverb may not have been the seed from which the lovely parable there recorded grew.

4. he that exacteth gifts. Literally, 'a man of exaction.' The word here employed means in every other context 'ritual offerings.' Of course, the offerings in the Temple were really legalized religious taxes (see Ezek. xlv. 13–16, &c.), but here the word may cover all kinds of taxation, and one knows how great a curse unjust taxation has been, and still is, in Oriental countries.

5. flattereth. The word so rendered is really stronger, and signifies all kinds of wiles employed to lead a man astray. His neighbour, here, as so often, means simply 'any one else.' In Bunyan's allegory, Flatterer is represented as 'A man black of flesh, but covered with a very light robe,' who led Christian and Hopeful astray, and, 'before they were aware, they found themselves within the compass of a net in which they were both so entangled that they knew not what to do; and with that the white robe fell off the black man's back.'

6. transgression. An alteration of the Hebrew gives the meaning 'path,' which is excellent, and similarly, in the next line, the words 'doth sing' can be rendered 'may run.' These alterations preserve better the form of the figure, but the meaning is equally clear in either case.

7. hath not understanding. This phrase is generally interpreted either as meaning 'does not take the trouble to understand' or 'has not sufficient mental grasp to apprehend the meaning of the problem.' Toy would alter the text so as to read 'does not

Scornful men set a city in a flame: 8
But wise men turn away wrath.
If a wise man hath a controversy with a foolish man, 9
[a] Whether he be angry or laugh, there will be no rest.
The bloodthirsty hate him that is perfect: 10
[b] And as for the upright, they seek his life.
A fool uttereth all his [c] anger: 11
But a wise man keepeth it back and stilleth it.
If a ruler hearkeneth to falsehood, 12
All his servants are wicked.
The poor man and the oppressor meet together: 13

---

[a] Or, *He rageth and laugheth, and there is no rest*

[b] Or, *But the upright care for his soul*

[c] Heb. *spirit.*

---

understand justice,' or 'does not plead for the needy,' but this is not requisite.

8. Cf. xi. 11. Here, as so often in the book, the particular mischief of scoffing is singled out for warning.

9. a controversy. This seems to be used in the special sense of a lawsuit.

Whether he be angry. The uncertainty here is as to who is meant, the fool or the wise man. The Hebrew most naturally suggests the fool as the subject of the clause (see margin), but in any case the meaning is similar to that of many proverbs, where the fool is spoken of as hopelessly incorrigible.

10. they seek his life. As the words are here read, this statement refers to the bloodthirsty, but it is probable that the text should be so altered as to read 'the upright take care of the life of the perfect.'

11. A fool uttereth. On this clause cf. xii. 16.

keepeth it back. This would naturally refer to the fool's anger, but more probably the reference is to the anger of the wise man, so it is better to read that a wise man restrained his wrath (cf. xvi. 32; Eph. iv. 31, &c.).

12. falsehood. Probably, 'false accusations.' Cf. Ecclus. x. 2, and the common proverb, 'Like priest, like people.'

13. oppressor. From the context it would appear that this means the rich that grind the poor. The LXX renders 'creditor and debtor.' Cf. for the general idea xxii. 2, and also Matt. v. 45. The thought of the verse is not altogether fatalistic, though it is equivalent to saying that, in the words of the common phrase, 'It takes all sorts to make up a world.'

The Lord lighteneth the eyes of them both.
14 The king that faithfully judgeth the poor,
His throne shall be established for ever.
15 The rod and reproof give wisdom:
But a child left to himself causeth shame to his mother.
16 When the wicked [a] are increased, transgression increaseth:
But the righteous shall look upon their fall.
17 Correct thy son, and he shall give thee rest;
Yea, he shall give delight unto thy soul.
18 Where there is no vision, the people cast off restraint:
But he that keepeth the law, happy is he.
19 A servant will not be corrected by words:

[a] Or, *are in authority*

---

14. Cf. xx. 28; xxv. 5.

15. The rod and reproof. Better, 'the rod of reproof gives' (see xiii. 24; xxiii. 13). On the second clause see x. 1, and for the whole verse cf. xvii below.

16. are increased. More probably, as in verse 2 above, 'are in authority.'

shall look upon. This should be translated by a stronger phrase, such as 'feast their eyes upon.' The ethical attitude suggested is not of the very highest type, but was natural to a people exulting at the overthrow of their oppressors and persecutors. Toy compares the way in which the English Puritans regarded the Royalists. This verse is probably out of place, as it comes in between two verses whose thought is very closely connected, and the LXX reads this verse both here and after xxviii. 17. Its true position may probably be in that earlier place.

17. See xix. 18.

18. vision. The word is doubtful. The LXX translates 'guide,' and this is quite probable, but the reference here is to the precepts of the wise, as in Ecclus. vi. 35, viii. 8, seeing that nowhere else does this book speak of the vision of the prophets, but, as has been pointed out, it is not true to say that the period when prophecy flourished most was that during which the people were most obedient to the Divine commandments.

cast off restraint. This more probably means 'fall' or 'perish,' as in A. V.

19. A servant will not be corrected. This, of course, refers to the treatment of slaves, and obviously inculcates corporal

For though he understand he will not [a] give heed.
Seest thou a man that is hasty in his [b] words? 20
There is more hope of a fool than of him.
He that delicately bringeth up his servant from a child 21
Shall have him become [c] a son at the last.
An angry man stirreth up strife, 22
And a wrathful man aboundeth in transgression.
A man's pride shall bring him low: 23
But he that is of a lowly spirit shall obtain honour.
Whoso is partner with a thief hateth his own soul: 24

[a] Heb. *answer*. [b] Or, *business*

[c] The meaning of the word is doubtful. The Vulgate renders it, *refractory*.

---

punishment in dealing with them. The most instructive parallel is the passage in Ecclus. xxxiii. 24–29, where very severe discipline is suggested.

20. in his words. Probably, with margin, 'in his business.' The second clause is identical with xxvi. 12.

21. This verse should probably be closely connected with verse 19, from which it has, perhaps in error, been divided by verse 20.

a son. The word so translated is very uncertain, seeing that this is the only place of its occurrence. It has been variously rendered 'refractory,' 'unthankful,' and, by Delitzsch, 'a nursery,' the latter meaning referring to the supposed fact that the owner's house will become overrun by the children of his indulged slave. The LXX has obviously had quite a different text, for it renders, 'He who from a child lives in luxury will become a slave and come to grief in the end,' which gives a very true and excellent meaning, but one not to be obtained from the present Hebrew. The general sense is clear, namely, a warning against over-indulgence on the part of any one.

22. An angry man. This means a man of wrathful temperament, and does not refer simply to a momentary outburst of anger. On the second clause of the verse see xvii. 19.

23. low . . . lowly. This play upon words represents the same thing in the original. On the thought of the verse cf. xviii. 12.

24. hateth his own soul. That is, 'is his own enemy.' The best comment upon the verse, especially on the second clause, is Lev. v. 1. The situation suggested seems to be that of a partner in the crime, who, hearing the curse pronounced upon the unknown

[a] He heareth the adjuration and uttereth nothing.
25 The fear of man bringeth a snare:
But whoso putteth his trust in the LORD [b] shall be safe.
26 Many seek the ruler's favour:
But a man's judgement *cometh* from the LORD.
27 An unjust man is an abomination to the righteous:
And he that is upright in the way is an abomination to the wicked.

30 The words of Agur the son of [c] Jakeh; the [d] oracle.

---

[a] See Lev. v. 1.
[b] Heb. *shall be set on high.*
[c] Or, *Jakeh, of Massa* See Gen. xxv. 14.
[d] Or, *burden*

---

criminal, fails to disclose his knowledge. This is better than to understand it as the R. V. translates, as being a reference to perjury. We should therefore render, instead of 'adjuration,' 'curse.' The whole verse contains a warning against yielding to evil courses, not only because of the sin these involve, but because they lure a man on to worse acts.

25. shall be safe. Literally, 'shall be set on high.' (Cf. xviii. 10; Ps. xx. 1.) The LXX curiously translates this verse in two forms, the first corresponding with our English version and the second being 'impiety brings a snare upon a man, but he who trusteth in the Lord (not Jahweh, as in the former clause, but the same word as that employed in Acts iv. 24, see R.V. margin) shall be saved.'

xxx. On the general relation of this chapter to the rest of the book see Introduction, p. 12. It very probably contains the latest proverbs in the whole series, or, at all events, is later *in its present form* than all that precedes it. Great difficulties attach to the translation and interpretation of the opening verse. It is obviously a title, but whether the title refers to the whole chapter, or only to a section of it, is a matter of great controversy, and, further, it is not clear whether the whole verse is to be taken as a title, or only part of it. The suggestion of the R. V., on the whole, seems most probable, namely, that the first half of the verse constitutes a title to the collection of sayings that follow in this chapter, while the second half of the verse is to be closely linked with the paragraph, which extends to the end of verse 4. When we have decided thus far, the next question that arises is how we are to understand the terms of the title. The name Agur occurs nowhere else. It is probably best to retain it in its original

The man saith [a] unto Ithiel, unto Ithiel and Ucal:

[a] Or, as otherwise read, *I have wearied myself, O God, I have wearied myself, O God, and am consumed: for I am &c.*

Hebrew form Agur ben Jakeh, and admit that we know nothing further of him. Unfortunately, however, these proper names are capable of translation, and many of the ancient versions took them as being simply words of an ordinary sentence; thus the LXX renders, 'Reverence my words, my son, and receive them and repent,' while the Latin version understands as follows: 'The words of the assembler, the son of the vomiter,' which obviously understands the first word in a similar sense to Eccles. (cf. Eccles. i. 10) as collector of an assembly or of teachings, and the second to a man who pours out teaching. On the other hand, the word Jakeh has been rendered 'obedient' or 'pious,' and so the old Hebrew commentators understood it. A further difficulty is introduced by the word rendered 'oracle,' which many understand to be also a proper name, namely, Massa. (See Exod. xvii. 7, &c.) So understood, the word would denote the place from which the writer came, but would give us no further information about him. As the word occurs again in the opening verse of chap. xxxi, editors who there read 'Lemuel, king of Massa,' understand here a relation between the two writers, considering it probable that Agur is the king's brother; but this is all extremely speculative. By altering the text Cheyne and others read 'Agur, the author of wise poems.' The objection to taking 'oracle' as it stands is that elsewhere in the O. T. it is a word confined to the prophetic literature (see Isa. xxx. 6, &c., &c.), and always immediately introduces the message uttered. In neither way, therefore, is it suitable to this verse.

The man saith: This second clause of the verse is no easier to interpret than the former. We may perhaps unite the word 'oracle' with this, and render 'the oracle of the man spoken unto,' &c., but here again the words of the Hebrew may either be proper names, as the R. V. prints them, or may constitute an intelligible sentence, which is rendered in the margin as follows: 'I have wearied myself, O God; I have wearied myself, and am consumed' (or have failed). The majority of the old versions adopted this course, though they interpreted differently; e. g. the LXX has, 'These things saith the man to those who trust in God, and I cease,' which does not make much sense. Cheyne follows this suggestion of the LXX, and, by altering the text a little, renders thus: 'The words of the guilty man Hak-koheleth (see note on Ecclus. i. 1) to those that believe in God,' which he takes to be an appropriate title for the first four verses, the answer to which is given in verse 5. We have, of course, to consider the possibility

2 Surely I am more brutish than any man,
And have not the understanding of a man:
3 And I have not learned wisdom,
[a] Neither have I the knowledge of the Holy One.
4 Who hath ascended up into heaven, and descended?

---

[a] Or, *That I should have the knowledge &c.*

that has been so often before us in this book, viz. that the text is hopelessly corrupt, and that all these interpretations are guesses in the dark. On the whole, it seems most satisfactory to regard the heading of the whole chapter to be 'the words of Agur-ben-Jakeh of Massa,' and then to begin the first poem by the words, 'I have wearied myself,' &c.

2. brutish here means 'stupid,' 'lacking in intellect,' and the form of the expression is that of the superlative, and the whole verse is probably ironical, the temper of mind being that of Job when brought into contact with his friends, who supposed they could interpret accurately the will of God.

Wildeboer appropriately quotes in illustration the opening monologue of Faust in Goethe's great poem, where we find the philosopher in the silence of his chamber soliloquizing as follows:

> 'I've studied now philosophy
> And jurisprudence, medicine—
> And even, alas, theology—
> From end to end, with labour keen;
> And here, poor fool! with all my lore
> I stand, no wiser than before;
> . . . . . .
> These ten years long, with many woes,
> I've led my scholars by the nose,
> And see, that nothing can be known!'

The main question about these verses is as to whether they are supposed to be spoken by the same speaker as verses 5 and 6, or whether in these opening verses he is not quoting the words of some one else, which he answers in the thought of verses 5 and 6. Interpreting verse 1 as we have done, it seems more likely that the whole passage to the end of verse 6 is by the same speaker, and indicates the progress of his thought from a despairing agnosticism to a definite trust in the Divine being. Compare for similar ideas the passages in Isa. xl. 12–17, and Job xxxviii–xli.

3. knowledge of the Holy One. See note on ix. 10.

4. This verse is very closely modelled upon the series of questions contained in Job xxxviii. 4–11, and is very probably

Who hath gathered the wind in his fists?
Who hath bound the waters in his garment?
Who hath established all the ends of the earth?
What is his name, and what is his son's name, if thou
knowest?
[a] Every word of God is [b] tried: 5
He is a shield unto them that trust in him.
Add thou not unto his words, 6
Lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar.

---

[a] See Ps. xii. 6 and xviii. 30. [b] Heb. *purified*.

---

based upon that passage. The point of the rhetorical questions is to describe the feebleness of man and his intellect as over against the majesty and magnificence of the outer universe. It is probable that upon the first question are based such N. T. references as those of John iii. 13 and Eph. iv. 9, applied to Christ.

gathered the wind. Cf. Ps. cxxxv. 7; Amos iv. 13.

Who hath bound. See Job xxvi. 8. The reference is obviously to the clouds, which are regarded as the Divine garments in which the Creator is enabled to wrap the rain as a man gathers in his robe the possessions he wishes to carry.

the ends of the earth. Ps. xxii. 27.

What is his name? The union of the idea of the Creator with that of His Son we need not suppose to be any foreshadowing of later ideas of the Logos, nor can it possibly be, as the older Jewish commentators suppose, a reference to Israel, for in that case the name would be known. It must rather be taken as a kind of proverbial equivalent for full knowledge in all his relations of the person referred to. Its significance being equivalent to such a question as, 'Are you able to explain in every particular the nature and relationship of the Creator?'

5. Every word of God. This verse is a quotation from Ps. xviii. 30. Cf. further for close resemblances Ps. xii. 6. The word 'God' is a form in the Hebrew which only occurs here in Proverbs, though it is the ordinary one in the late Hebrew writings. It is altered from the word in Ps. xviii, which there is Jahweh.

6. Add thou not. This verse is prose, and seems to be quoted in its first clause from Deut. iv. 2, while the second part of it has a strong resemblance to Job xiii. 10. The exact reference of the verse is not quite clear, but probably it may be the utterance of a somewhat conservative mind that did not wish to go beyond what

7 Two things have I asked of thee;
Deny me *them* not before I die:
8 Remove far from me vanity and lies:
Give me neither poverty nor riches;

---

was in his own day regarded as the written scripture. In 132 B. C. we have the earliest reference to the well-known division of the Hebrew scriptures into Law, Prophets, and Writings, and this paragraph may be as late as that reference. Many of the thinkers of that age introduced new doctrines from external sources which were not known to the earlier writers, and this may be a protest against such practices. (Cf. Rev. xxii. 18.)

7. Two things. With this verse begins a series of seven utterances in this chapter which are arranged on a numerical basis. The method was probably one very ancient in Hebrew literature, for we find it in the opening chapters of Amos, where the formula frequently occurs, 'For three transgressions, yea, for four.' It is also to be found in Ps. lx. 2, 11, 'God hath spoken once, twice have I heard this.' Cf. further Job v. 19, xxxiii. 14, xl. 5. It is probable that the form of expression may be one common to many literatures in an early stage of development. As Toy points out, it is found also in the Finnish Epic *Kalevala*, where, for example, in Runo xxxi, lines 161 to 163 run

> 'Burned the fire, a day, a second,
> Burning likewise on the third day,
> When they went to look about them.'

Also cf. Runo xxxvii, lines 65 to 68.

> 'Once and twice he worked the bellows,
> For a third time worked the bellows,
> Then looked down into the furnace.'[1]

It has been noted by several commentators that, in strict accordance with the similar passages in this chapter, we should expect the verse to read, 'Two things have I asked of thee, yea, two things deny me not,' and it must be confessed that the closing words of this verse, 'before I die,' scarcely seem appropriate, for the things requested are obviously continuous gifts of a lifetime, and it is possible, therefore, that some alteration of the original text has taken place.

8. neither poverty nor riches. This prayer has become almost proverbial as an expression of a desire for the safe middle lot in

---

[1] Cf. for a similar form, viz. 'four maner of folkis,' Dunbar's fine little poem, 'Of men evill to pleis.' See also Chaucer, *Wife of Bath's Prologue*, ll. 361–77.

Feed me with [a] the food that is needful for me:
Lest I be full, and deny *thee*, and say, Who is the LORD? 9
Or lest I be poor, and steal,
And [b] use profanely the name of my God.

Slander not a servant unto his master, 10
Lest he curse thee, and thou be held guilty.

[a] Heb. *the bread of my portion.* [b] Heb. *handle the name.*

---

life. It is used in a well-known passage by Bunyan: when Christiana and her friends are in the Interpreter's house and see the man with the muck-rake, she cries out, Oh, deliver me from this muck-rake.' 'That prayer, said the Interpreter, has lain by till it is almost rusty: give me not riches is scarce the prayer of one of ten thousand. Straws, and sticks, and dust with most are the great things now looked after.'

food that is needful. Literally, 'bread of my portion.' The phrase is very closely akin to that in the petition of the Lord's prayer, 'our daily bread.'

9. Lest I be full. Cf. verse 22 below. The expression is one denoting prosperity, and shows a clear apprehension of the danger that besets the rich man, whose difficulty in entering the kingdom of heaven our Lord sympathetically recognized.

use profanely. The meaning here is obviously bringing to disrepute by stealing, and so causing God's name to be profaned by those who throw scorn at one of His professed followers who has transgressed the moral law. The writer in these verses takes no one-sided view of life, but recognizes the serious spiritual risks that attach both to the condition of poverty and of riches.

10. This is an isolated proverb that has found its way into this collection somehow, with no connexion either in form or thought with what precedes and follows it. Similar isolated verses are to be found later in the chapter, namely, verses 17, 20, 32, 33.

Slander. Perhaps the word should not be made quite so special, but rather be translated 'gossip about.'

Lest he curse thee. See note on xxvi. 2.

be held guilty. This is the only occurrence of the original word in the book. It was a technical word connected with the ritual of the Temple (see Lev. iv. 13, &c.), and its employment here may possibly designate the danger of being involved in some such controversy as will bring the man into conflict both with civic and ecclesiastical authorities. Plumptre quotes in illustration of the verse a saying from the Egyptian book of ritual, where one who pleads before Osiris, the judge of the dead, says in his own defence. 'I have not slandered a slave to his master.'

11 There is a generation that curseth their father,
And doth not bless their mother.
12 There is a generation that are pure in their own eyes,
And *yet* are not washed from their filthiness.
13 There is a generation, Oh how lofty are their eyes!
And their eyelids are lifted up.
14 There is a generation whose teeth are *as* swords, and their jaw teeth *as* knives,
To devour the poor from off the earth, and the needy from among men.
15 The [a] horseleach hath two daughters, [b] *crying*, Give, give.

[a] Or, *vampire* [b] Or, called

---

11. There is a generation. This group of four verses does not numerically state its division, but the form of the language shows clearly that four classes of men are described, and they are all men about whom we have already found numerous proverbs in the course of the book. The actual form of the original shows that each verse consists in an exclamatory utterance. There is really no copulative verb such as the R. V. introduces. On the sin designated in verse 11 see xx. 20; on that in verse 12 see xx. 9; on that in verse 13 see vi. 17; and on that in verse 14 see i. 11, as well as Ps. lvii. 4.

14. To devour the poor. This clause is probably an explanatory addition to the verse from the hand of some scribe, as it spoils the symmetry of the passage, and inartistically limits the general statement.

15. The horseleach. The word so rendered is very difficult of explanation. It is true that the meaning here given may be the correct one, so far as the word goes, but it is not then easy to explain its exact reference to the rest of the verse, for the daughters are said to be two in number, and then the comparison goes on to deal with four insatiable things. We must suppose, therefore, either that some words have been missed out, that two has been wrongly inserted instead of four, or that this opening clause with reference to the horse-leech and her daughters is, as Frankenberg supposes, an interpolation. Many think that the word designates a vampire or ghoul, such as are common in Arabian stories; and some attach it to the legend of Lilith, the demon who figures largely in Hebrew legend. Cheyne has a very radical treatment of the text by which, as in verse 1 above, he attributes the saying

There are three things that are never satisfied,
Yea, four that say not, Enough:
[a] The grave; and the barren womb; 16
The earth that is not satisfied with water;
And the fire that saith not, Enough.

The eye that mocketh at his father, 17
And despiseth to obey his mother,

---

[a] Heb. *Sheol.*

that follows to Koheleth. The voracity and insatiableness of the horse-leech is an appropriate enough figure for what is to follow, if only the connexion were clear. In the present condition of the text, however, that connexion must remain uncertain. It is most probable that the line forms the first clause of an unfinished proverb.

16. The grave: i. e. 'Sheol.' See xxvii. 20.

the barren womb. In addition to the general appropriateness of the figure, one must remember the special slight that attached to childlessness among Hebrew women (see Gen. xxx. 1). The form of the whole verse is what the rhetoricians call a *chiasma*, that is to say, the first and fourth similitudes correspond to one another, as do the second and third. Similar proverbs are quoted from the Arabic and Sanskrit, the former of which reads: 'Three things are not satisfied by three—the womb without children, the fire without wood, and the earth without rain'; while the latter runs—'Fire is not sated with wood, nor the ocean with the streams, nor death with all the living, nor women with men.' It is probable, therefore, from these comparisons that this proverbial verse was common to several people, being, as it is, the outcome of common experience and observation.

17. This is another of the isolated proverbs. See verse 10 above.

The eye. Here used obviously as the organ that most eloquently expresses the thoughts of the heart; cf. the evil eye and similar phrases. It is by a strong metaphor, of course, that the eye can be said to mock and despise.

to obey. The word so translated is very uncertain in meaning. The Greek renders 'old age,' and the Hebrew should probably be altered so as to give this meaning. The reading of our text was not proposed even by Jewish commentators until a very late period. 'The old age of his mother' gives a very good meaning (cf. xxiii. 22).

The ravens of [a] the valley shall pick it out,
And the [b] young eagles shall eat it.

18 There be three things which are too wonderful for me,
Yea, four which I know not:
19 The way of an eagle in the air;
The way of a serpent upon a rock;
The way of a ship in the midst of the sea;
And the way of a man with a maid.

[a] Or, *the brook* [b] Or, *vultures*

The ravens of the valley. This degradation implies what is not expressed in the verse, namely, that such children will come to an evil end, and will die not a natural but a violent death, so that their bodies will remain unburied, and their graves be 'unwept, unhonoured, and unsung.' The word rendered 'valley' is best represented by the Arabic word *wady*, which is now commonly employed in English to represent the watercourses of Palestine through which streams only run in winter. Cf. the Greek curse 'To the ravens!'

young eagles is literally 'sons of the vulture,' and does not mean 'the young of the vulture so much as birds belonging to the tribe of vultures.

18. too wonderful for me. The question here is what is the point of the wonder. Some have answered 'the tracklessness,' but while this is appropriate enough to the first three members of the comparison, it is not easily ascribed to the fourth. Probably, therefore, we should find the common reference to the inexplicability of each of the things cited, especially as we find each one of them, with the exception of the second, referred to elsewhere in a somewhat similar way.

19. The way of an eagle: rather, 'vulture,' as before. See Job xxxix. 26, 27 and Wisdom v. 11.

The way of a serpent. There may be a reference to the legendary curse pronounced upon the serpent in Gen. iii. 14, especially as the Jewish interpreters supposed that its feet were cut off as part of its curse, and so its mode of locomotion may have appeared peculiarly marvellous to them, and the height of the marvel have been reached when the serpent was seen gliding across a smooth rock.

The way of a ship. See Ps. civ. 26, and Wisdom v. 10.

the way of a man. This cannot be given the idyllic reference to love and courtship which it has often been supposed to bear, both from the nature of the comparison and from the fact that the

So is the way of an adulterous woman; 20
She eateth, and wipeth her mouth,
And saith, I have done no wickedness.

[a] For three things the earth doth tremble, 21
And for four, *which* it cannot bear:
For a servant when he is king; 22
And a fool when he is filled with meat;
For an odious woman when she is married; 23
And an handmaid that is heir to her mistress.

[a] Heb. *Under*.

---

word translated 'maid' does not mean either virgin or unmarried (see Isa. vii. 14; Song of Songs vi. 8), but only 'young woman.' The reference is clearly to the mysterious origin of human beings (cf. Eccles. xi. 5 and Ps. cxxxix. 13-16).

20. So is the way. The majority of commentators are agreed that this is an addition of a scribe, who has inserted a connective particle that knits this verse with the preceding. Originally, no doubt, the verse stood alone as an isolated grimly humorous statement which spoke of the adulteress as being so careless about her gross sin that she imagined its consequences might be removed as easily as a person could remove the traces of a meal by wiping his lips with a serviette. What is specially interesting to us is to see that the scribe by thus connecting the verse with the previous one has understood the point of the comparison to be the tracklessness rather than the marvellousness of the examples cited.

21. For three things. Rather, 'under three things.' As Toy says of these three verses, 'The tone seems to be humorous or whimsical,' because the language employed is too exaggerated to suit the actual facts.

22. a servant. See xix. 10. Such sudden changes of position and rank as are here spoken of always involve many difficulties —not only for the man himself, who seems to reap the benefit, but for all who are under his sway.

filled with meat. As in verse 9 above, this means 'in prosperity.'

23. an odious woman. Odious is literally 'hated,' so that probably it means 'unattractive,' that is, embittered by having been long passed by and not finding a husband. The idea is that when at last she does find a husband, she is so much of a shrew that the man discovers he has 'caught a Tartar,' as our common phrase expresses it.

is heir to. It is a question whether this means literally

24 There be four things which are little upon the earth,
But they are exceeding wise:
25 The ants are a people not strong,
Yet they provide their meat in the summer;
26 The [a] conies are but a feeble folk,
Yet make they their houses in the rocks;
27 The locusts have no king,

[a] See Lev. xi. 5.

'heiress,' of which we have no instance in the actual Hebrew legislation, for we find no reference to a woman owning property in her own right, and having power to bequeath it, though that may, of course, have been possible without our now possessing any documentary proof of it, but the reference may be to the custom common in earlier Israel and also referred to in the old Code of Hammurabi, of a wife giving her slave-woman to her husband in order to raise up children, as in the case of Sarah and Hagar, in which story also we have an excellent illustration of a family feud such as that practice often entailed. It is scarcely likely, however, that this reference applies to so late a period in Israel's history as that at which these words were written.

24. The four things here used by way of comparison are all drawn from the realm of animal life, and may remind us of the way in which Aesop's Fables make use of the animal creation as illustrative of ethical practice and common-sense guidance of life. Wonderful modern examples are to be found in Uncle Remus's stories of Brer Rabbit, and in Mr. Kipling's *Jungle Books*.

25. The ants. See chap. vi. 6–8 and note there.

26. The conies. These creatures are referred to in Lev. xi. 5 and Ps. civ. 18. They are small mammals of a dull fawn colour, which live in holes in the rocky ground. Their food consists of leaves, fruit, &c., and they are eaten by the Arabs with avidity. They are about the size of small rabbits, but belong, of course, to a quite different family. Their proper scientific name is the *hyrax syriacus*, and they have been termed in English 'rock badgers.' Their name in Hebrew was *shaphan*, which is also found as a proper name in Ezek. viii. 11 and elsewhere, and it is supposed by many to be a clan name derived from this animal (see article 'Shaphan' in *Enc. Bibl.*).

27. locusts. The classical passage on locusts in the O. T. is Joel ii. 1–11, and in verses 7 and 8 of that passage the ordered march of the locust army is magnificently described. See Driver's notes on the passage in Joel in the *Cambridge Bible*, and also the notes in this series.

Yet go they forth all of them by bands;
The lizard [a] taketh hold with her hands, 28
Yet is she in kings' palaces.

There be three things which are stately in their march, 29
Yea, four which are stately in going:
The lion, which is mightiest among beasts, 30
And turneth not away for any;
The [b] greyhound; the he-goat also; 31

[a] Or, *thou canst seize with thy hands*
[b] Or, *war-horse* Heb. *well girt* (or, *well knit*) *in the loins.*

---

28. The lizard. The A.V. and some older translators rendered 'spider,' but there is no doubt that the lizard, which was the rendering of the Greek and Latin versions, as well as of almost all modern scholars, is correct. If we take the rendering of the text, namely, 'taketh hold with her hands,' then the reference is to the lizard's well-known capability of running on the smoothest surfaces, or even running on the ceiling like a fly. Probably, however, the rendering of the margin is to be preferred, namely, thou canst seize with thy hands.' The point would then be the lizard's comparative weakness, and yet its ability to make her way into king's houses. Thus it is brought on a level with the other three creatures named in this group of verses.

29. These three verses are extremely corrupt, and it is probably impossible to restore the text with any certainty. The lion, the he-goat, and the king are fairly certain elements, but for the rest, conjecture plays a large part in filling up the blanks.

31. The greyhound. This is following certain Greek versions and other translators. Some modern editors have suggested 'war-horse' or 'zebra,' but the majority of the ancient versions read 'cock.' The original word seems to mean 'girt about the loins,' which may refer to the neat build of a well-bred cock; but an alteration of the Hebrew gives the meaning 'proudly stepping,' which, of course, suits either 'cock' or 'war-horse.' The difficulty of accepting the witness of the old versions is that it seems curious to introduce a cock among these grander beasts, but, on the other hand, we have to remember that it was probably introduced from Persia, as Aristophanes calls it the Persian bird, and the reference here may be attributable to its novelty. See article 'Cock' in *Enc. Bibl.*, where Cheyne suggests a further alteration that would give the meaning 'a quarrelsome cock.'

he-goat. On this animal see Daniel viii. 5.

And the king, [a] against whom there is no rising up.
32 If thou hast done foolishly in lifting up thyself,
Or if thou hast thought evil,
Lay thine hand upon thy mouth.
33 For the [b] churning of milk bringeth forth butter,
And the [b] wringing of the nose bringeth forth blood:
So the [b] forcing of wrath bringeth forth strife.

31 [c] The words of king Lemuel; the [d] oracle which his mother taught him.

[a] Or, *when his army is with him* [b] Heb. *pressing*.
[c] Or, *The words of Lemuel king of Massa, which &c.* See ch. xxx. 1, margin. [d] Or, *burden*

---

against whom. The word so rendered is practically unintelligible. Some have taken it to be a proper name Alqum, but no satisfactory significance can be attached to any of the conjectural persons supposed to be signified by the name. If an attempt is made to translate the word, then the revised text and margin give as good readings as are possible, but in both cases they do violence to the grammar. The LXX read 'a king who harangues a people,' also apparently the result of a conjecture. It seems likely that there was some primitive corruption of the text, which may have contained a reference to some other animal, the name of which it is not possible now to recover.

32. If thou hast done foolishly. The first two clauses of this verse are extremely uncertain. Frankenberg, for example, only translates, 'thy hand upon thy mouth' out of the whole verse, and gives up the rest as impossible. A certain general idea may be gained of the significance, but not more than a general idea, namely, 'silence is better than committing oneself to foolish courses of action or speech.' This is a thought that the book has rendered familiar to us in other passages, but there is great question as to whether the words rendered 'done foolishly' and 'thought evil' can bear the significance given to them, and the older versions do not in this case help us much.

33. churning. Literally, 'pressing,' and the same Hebrew word is used for each of the verbs rendered in our version 'wringing' and 'forcing.' Some have suggested that the first clause is an addition by a scribe, for the figure it employs seems to have little significance in the context, and has no parallel in what follows. On the other hand, it is quite obvious that the second and third clauses are closely connected because there is a play upon words in them, the word for 'nose' being *ap*, and that for 'anger' *appayim*.

What, my son? and what, O son of my womb? 2
And what, O son of my vows?
Give not thy strength unto women, 3
Nor thy ways to [a] that which destroyeth kings.
It is not for kings, O Lemuel, it is not for kings to 4
  drink wine;
Nor for princes [b] *to say*, Where is strong drink?
Lest they drink, and forget [c] the law, 5
And pervert the judgement [d] of any that is afflicted.

---

[a] Or, as otherwise read, *them that destroy*

[b] Another reading is, *to desire strong drink.*

[c] Heb. *that which is decreed.*

[d] Heb. *of all the sons of affliction.*

---

xxxi. **1. king Lemuel.** Of such a person nothing is known apart from what is said here, so that some translators have been tempted to understand it as a symbolical name meaning 'devoted to God.' Other conjectures have been made as to possible alterations of the text, of which perhaps the most probable is that of Bickell, who thinks the name has arisen from the scribe's reading twice the Hebrew letters which mean 'of a king,' which might easily give rise to this name.

oracle. On this word see notes on xxx. 1. As there, so here, it is probably better to translate it as a proper name, Massa, although the identification of this place with any well-known kingdom is very uncertain.

2. What, my son? The Greek version suggests that instead of these interrogatives we should read, 'Thou wilt give heed, my son, to my sayings, and wilt observe my words,' and without much difficulty the Hebrew could be altered to give some such meaning. The Hebrew of the whole passage is late, and possibly in this way to be brought more into line with other passages of the book.

3. ways. A slight alteration of the text gives the meaning 'love,' and it should almost certainly be 'those who destroy,' which is probably a synonymous parallel to 'women' of the previous clause.

4. It is not for kings. Frankenberg says that the verse mocks at all attempt to translate or explain it. The repetition of the words in the first clause is suspicious, and probably points to some primitive corruption. Instead of 'to say where is' in the second clause, the words so rendered may probably mean 'to mix' or 'to drink.' It is, again, a case in which we get a fair glimmering of the general meaning, but have no clear idea of the individual words.

5. of any. Rather, 'of all that are.'

6 Give strong drink unto him that is ready to perish,
And wine unto the bitter in soul:
7 Let him drink, and forget his poverty,
And remember his misery no more.
8 Open thy mouth for the dumb,
In the cause of all such as are [a] left desolate.
9 Open thy mouth, judge righteously,
And minister judgement to the poor and needy.

10 A virtuous woman who can find?

---

[a] Or, *ready to pass away* Heb. *the sons of passing away.*

6, 7. Here the translation is sufficiently clear, and though to many modern readers the ethical standard of the advice may not seem very high, we have to remember that, in contrast to the foolish and wicked use of wine which has just been condemned in the previous verse, this is a high and noble service which that gift may render, and to the Hebrew mind wine was also a gift of God (see Ps. civ. 15). That the Wisdom writers had a sufficiently clear idea of the evil that indulgence in strong drink wrought we have already had sufficient evidence in xxiii. 29–35.

8. For the dumb. This cannot, of course, mean the physically dumb; but interpreters generally understand it of those who through poverty or some other reason need some one to plead for them. But, as Toy humorously remarks, 'The Oriental man or woman when wronged is anything but dumb,' so that some other word has to be sought. An easy alteration gives the rendering 'in truth,' which may probably be right. Frankenberg quotes appropriately Job xxix. 15 as affording a similar idea to that in this passage.

10–31. Here we have a section quite different from anything else in Proverbs, though it is a poetical form common to Hebrew literature, both in the Book of Psalms and the Book of Lamentations. It is an acrostic poem, each verse of which begins with a letter of the Hebrew alphabet—an arrangement that may have originally been designed as an aid to the memory, though possibly it was nothing more than an added artifice to show the skill of the writer, as is the case in the strict rule of the sonnet. The subject of the poem is the ideal woman, and it has much interest because it shows the conception of womanhood which at the period of writing seemed to be the highest and best. The ideal may not seem very lofty to many modern minds, as it is little else than the picture of a perfect housewife and shrewd woman of business. But other

For her price is far above [a] rubies.
The heart of her husband trusteth in her, 11
And he shall have no lack of [b] gain.
She doeth him good and not evil 12
All the days of her life.
She seeketh wool and flax, 13
And worketh [c] willingly with her hands.
She is like the merchant-ships; 14
She bringeth her food from afar.
She riseth also while it is yet night, 15

[a] See Job xxviii. 18. [b] Heb. *spoil.* [c] Or, *at the business of*

---

and more spiritual qualities are probably implied in the praise contained in verses 28 and 29. At all events, it is an interesting picture of the high position given to women, and of the comparative freedom which at that period they seem to have enjoyed, contrasting favourably with estimates found in Ecclesiastes and in many passages of the Greek writers.

10. virtuous. This should rather be rendered 'a woman of capacity,' and probably it is not only woman, but wife, so that the special praise is directed to the mother of the household. The form of the question is not ironical, as if no such person was to be found, but it rather implies the difficulty and care that is involved in the search, while all that follows points to the joy and satisfaction of attainment. Cf. the whole picture of Penelope in the *Odyssey* as an interesting parallel.

rubies. See note on iii. 15.

11. trusteth: i. e. has confidence in her wisdom and practical shrewdness.

gain. Elsewhere this word means 'booty taken in war,' but here obviously the reference is to general wealth.

12. good and . . . evil. These words must also be referred to the effect of her conduct upon his household and property.

13. willingly. The literal meaning of the Hebrew is 'in the pleasure of her hand,' which seems to mean 'as she chooses,' and not 'willingly,' as our text takes it. Her wisdom is apparent, that is, in the use she makes of the material that she obtains.

14. like the merchant-ships. This points to the wide reach of her business enterprises. She does not rely upon home produce, but employs the merchant to bring her material from far-off lands. The reference is an interesting example of the wide commercial relations of the period.

And giveth meat to her household,
And their [a] task to her maidens.
16 She considereth a field, and buyeth it:
With the fruit of her hands she planteth a vineyard.
17 She girdeth her loins with strength,
And maketh strong her arms.
18 She perceiveth that her merchandise is profitable:
Her lamp goeth not out by night.
19 She layeth her hands to the distaff,
And her [b] hands hold the spindle.

[a] Or, *portion* [b] Heb. *palms.*

---

15. task. Literally, 'portion,' which from the parallelism of the previous verse possibly means food. It is very likely that this third clause is a scribal addition, and should be omitted.

16. the fruit of her hands: i. e. 'her earnings.' The whole verse betrays the clever planning of a woman of business, who makes a profit gained at one enterprise form the basis of another, and is ever widening her opportunities of gain as well as strengthening her capital.

17. She girdeth, &c. This seems most likely to be understood figuratively, and not literally, and has a reference to the strong-minded way in which she never rests from her enterprises.

18. perceiveth. Literally, 'tasteth.' We might render 'learns by experience.'

Her lamp goeth not out. Benzinger tells us that among the Bedouin to this day they use the expression 'he sleeps in the darkness' as an equivalent for poverty, for in every house the custom is to allow the lamp to burn all the night through. For the meaning of the figure cf. Jer. xxv. 10; Job xviii. 6.

19. distaff. It is almost certain that these names of spinning implements are correct. There is some doubt about the Hebrew in the first case. These primitive and universally employed instruments find poetic description in one of the most beautiful of the poems of Catullus; the passage is referred to by Perowne here, and the following translation is that of Sir Theodore Martin:

'The left the distaff held, from which the right,
Plucking the wool with upturned fingers light,
Twisted the threads, which o'er the thumb they wound,
Then swiftly whirled the well-poised spindle round.'

She spreadeth out her [a] hand to the poor; 20
Yea, she reacheth forth her hands to the needy.
She is not afraid of the snow for her household; 21
For all her household are clothed with scarlet.
She maketh for herself [b] carpets of tapestry; 22
Her clothing is fine linen and purple.
Her husband is known in the gates, 23

[a] Heb. *palm*. [b] Or, *cushions*

---

20. She spreadeth out her hand. In this verse another activity of the hands is referred to. In the former case what the hands wrought for themselves was the subject of consideration, now it is what the hands do for others, and we learn that generosity and helpfulness is part of this old-world ideal of womanhood.

21. scarlet. The word is uncertain. As the Hebrew stands, scarlet is the correct rendering; but many slightly alter the word so as to get a meaning 'warm' out of it. Some of the old versions apparently read this, since they spoke of 'double garments.' Toy suggests altering the order of the lines so as to read verses 21 and 22 together in the following form:

'She is not afraid of the snow for her household;
She maketh for herself coverlets (?):
Her clothing is fine linen and purple,
And all her household are clothed with scarlet.'

This is a very ingenious suggestion, but, of course, it is purely conjectural, and it may be simpler to suppose that 'scarlet' is correct, and that they were in the habit of making warm garments of that colour, or that the idea is that, since her household are wealthy enough to wear scarlet, therefore they need have no fear of the cold of winter.

22. carpets of tapestry. See the note on vii. 16.

fine linen and purple. Cf. the rendering of Luke xvi. 19. The same words that are there used in the Greek Testament are here employed in the LXX. Probably the linen came from Egypt. We find it employed in state robes in that country (see Gen. xli. 42). The purple was obtained from the famous Mediterranean shell-fish, and the preparation of the dye was a great industry in Phoenicia.

23. known in the gates. As Toy remarks, the order of the verses does not seem very satisfactory, but we must remember that this is probably due to the limitations of the alphabetical arrangement of the poem; and yet there may be something in the

When he sitteth among the elders of the land.
24 She maketh linen garments and selleth them;
And delivereth girdles unto the [a] merchant.
25 Strength and dignity are her clothing;
And she laugheth at the time to come.
26 She openeth her mouth with wisdom;
And the [b] law of kindness is on her tongue.
27 She looketh well to the ways of her household,
And eateth not the bread of idleness.

[a] Heb. *Canaanite.* [b] Or, *teaching*

---

suggestion conveyed by the mention of the raiment, for we see how it also occurs in the lines from the *Odyssey*, appropriately quoted here by Plumptre, from the speech of Nausicaa to her father: 'Yea, and it is seemly that thou thyself, when thou art with the princes in council, shouldst have fresh raiment to wear' (*Odyssey*, 660).

24. linen garments. The word here used is different from that employed in verse 22, and is the same that we find in Mark xiv. 51. The material thus indicated was used for many purposes, as, for example, by surgeons and by the wrappers of mummies, and probably designates a very fine kind of fabric.

girdles. There are several words used with this meaning in the O. T. (see article 'Girdle' in *Enc. Bibl.*), but the word here employed designates the decorative girdle worn outside the dress; while that of the poorer classes is almost like our leathern belt, that of the richer class is made of rich material, and frequently highly ornamented.

merchant. As the margin shows, this is literally Canaanite, that is, Phoenician. That people seems to have been the great mercantile community of the period.

25. clothing. By a common Hebrew figure her character is spoken of here as raiment (cf. such passages as 2 Chron. vi. 41; Job xxix. 14; Ps. cxxxii. 9).

she laugheth. This implies that her foresight has enabled her to face the future without any apprehension. For the thought of the verse see the beautiful lines of Stephen Phillips in his poem 'Endymion':

> 'Kind hands, a still and sweet anxiety,
> Brave, prudent talk about the coming day.'

26. law of kindness. Rather, 'kindly counsel.'

27. ways is, of course, here 'conduct.'

Her children rise up, and call her blessed ; 28
Her husband *also*, and he praiseth her, *saying*:
Many daughters have done virtuously, 29
But thou excellest them all.
Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain . 30
But a woman that feareth the LORD, she shall be praised.
Give her of the fruit of her hands ; 31
And let her works praise her in the gates.

---

28. her children rise up. Here we see the effect of her conduct and character upon her own immediate circle. Frankenberg so interprets the Hebrew as to render, 'Her sons prosper, therefore people congratulate her ; her husband, therefore people praise her.' The sense is good, but it is doubtful whether the Hebrew will bear the meaning.

29. daughters. For this use of the word cf. S. of S. ii. 2, &c. It is almost certainly used simply as equivalent to women.

30. Favour . . . and beauty. These would be, perhaps, better rendered 'beauty and comeliness,' and the adjectives attached to them probably in both instances signify their transitory character rather than any moral quality that may be supposed to render beauty unworthy.

that feareth the LORD. This is the rendering of the Hebrew, but the LXX suggests that the original reading may have been 'a woman's intelligence,' and that this is the work of a scribe who desired an orthodox conclusion to the passage (see Toy's note).

31. This closing verse seems to be an appeal for a due public recognition of the character and service of the woman who has been praised throughout the whole length of the poem.

ECCLESIASTES;

OR, THE PREACHER

INTRODUCTION

AND

REVISED VERSION WITH ANNOTATIONS

ECCLESIASTES;

OR, THE PREACHER

INTRODUCTION

MANY societies are in existence for the study of special works or particular authors. We have our Browning societies, Dante societies, Omar Khayyam has a society for the study of his great poem, and even 'our, mad, bad, glad, sad brother,' Villon, has a society dedicated to the interpretation of his wild and curious rhymes. But it does not appear that any group of men has ever given itself to the study of Ecclesiastes; and yet the work contains quite as many problems and has raised as great and widespread discussions as have some of these other writers. As one of the students of the book has said, it is quite beyond any human capacity to read and estimate all that has been written upon this one little book. Its difficulties were felt by the writer's fellow countrymen in the days soon after its publication, and these problems, and many new ones springing out of them, have exercised the minds of Bible students throughout the centuries, and many remain even now unsolved. It may seem, therefore, scarcely worth while to add another to the long list of studies of the book; but the real excuse for so doing is that the questions it raises are continually present with each successive generation in new forms, and that in Ecclesiastes every age finds a reflection of some part at least of its own temper, and is compelled to seek an interpretation of it in terms of its own thought.

One fascination of the book is found in the fact that its students cannot agree even as to its main purpose and character. Some tell us that the writer is an out-and-out sceptic, while others have claimed it as an orthodox treatise in proof of the Divine providence and government. Heine, for example, termed it 'The Canticles of Scepticism,' while Delitzsch, on the other hand, called it 'The Canticles of the Fear of God.' Renan praised it as being the only charming book that a Jew had ever written, a book, he added, that touched our grief at every point, while he saw in the writer one who never posed but was always natural and simple. Even its practical tendencies have been understood in widely different senses, for while Frederick the Great reckoned it a true mirror of princes, and regarded it as one of the most valuable books in Scripture, one commentator says it may be regarded as 'a breviary of the most modern materialism, and of extreme licentiousness.' Views quite as extreme and divergent have been taken as to the form and construction of the book. Some look upon it as a carefully reasoned treatise, while others consider it to be a collection of detached reflections. By some it has been looked upon as a dialogue after the manner of Plato, in which, as in Tennyson's poem 'The Two Voices,' an argument is sustained between the God-fearing man and the materialist. Others find many hands at work in the book, and have traced divergent lines of thought to different editors. We can see, therefore, at the outset, that many problems face the student of this book, and that, whatever decisions are finally reached, we cannot expect to attain any conclusion that will be unanimously accepted.

The name of the book and its significance are at the outset matters of dispute. The title in our version is that found in the LXX. The Hebrew title is Koheleth, a participial form of a verb which means 'to call.' It is a rare form, however, and there are no very exact parallels with which to compare it. Besides, it is grammatically feminine, and cannot, therefore, agree in strictness with the figure of the king who is presented as the speaker. This difficulty has been got over by some by assuming that the word agrees with the personified figure of Wisdom, who is supposed to be the speaker throughout, but it is difficult to see how, on this theory, Wisdom could be identified with the king, and, besides, there is no hint that Wisdom is supposed to speak, neither are a great many of the sayings in the book appropriate on her lips. In all probability, therefore, the best way to understand it is, after a common Hebrew usage, to regard the feminine form as equivalent to a neuter adjective, which would then be rendered by some such phrase as 'the sort of person who addresses an assembly,' though some would give to it an intensive meaning, and render 'the great orator.' Cheyne considers that the name is probably the result of some original corruption of the text, and suggests that it springs from a confusion of the Hebrew equivalent of the word, which follows its first occurrence, namely, 'Vanity of vanities, all is vanity,' the letters of which in Hebrew might easily be misunderstood for the letters of the word rendered 'Ecclesiastes.' The rendering of our English version 'preacher' is not a very happy one, but it is difficult to find any other single word which better expresses the meaning, though 'teacher' or 'lecturer' would perhaps come nearer to it. One might suggest 'philosopher' or 'sage' as a not inexact equivalent of the significance of the original word. On the whole the best course to take in reading the book is to use the proper name Koheleth wherever it occurs, and bear in mind its significance.

We see, therefore, that the writer is an idealized person, and that his identification with a king in Jerusalem is only a literary fiction. The twelfth verse of the first chapter tells us that he 'was king over Israel in Jerusalem,' which, if spoken of a historical personage, must mean that at the time of writing he was a monarch in retirement. But such a description does not fit any of the sovereigns known to us in the history of Israel, least of all the son of David who is obviously indicated, namely, Solomon. Some writers have fancied that the book presents that

Grand Monarque in a repentant mood, in which he describes all his past experiences and the various directions in which he has sought for satisfaction and failed to find it. But in addition to history being against this interpretation, there are two other valid reasons against identifying the author of the book with Solomon. The first is the language. In Delitzsch's frequently quoted phrase, 'If the book of Koheleth were of old Solomonic origin, then there is no history of the Hebrew language.' The proof of this fact is, of course, only possible to students of Hebrew, and the lists of peculiar words and constructions must be sought in commentaries on the Hebrew text, though references to some outstanding instances will be found in the notes in this commentary. The second proof is in the ideas we find in these pages. The problems that perplex the writer are the problems of later Judaism, which first emerged in the Book of Job and in many of the later Psalms. The conception of God found in these pages is not that of Jahweh, who dwells in the midst of His people and is their familiar friend. Indeed, that characteristic name of earlier Judaism is never used in its pages at all; but the thought is of One who is remote from men and regards them more as a judge or ruler than in any other light. The conception finds characteristic utterance in v. 2: 'God is in heaven and thou upon earth, therefore let thy words be few.' 'The burden of the unintelligible world' presses very heavily upon this man's soul, and he feels himself handicapped by problems theoretical and practical which are too great for him. These are not the moods of Israel's sunny and more childlike faith, but the reflections of a later day that struggled hard with the dark problems of the universe.

Again, the historical background of the book, so far as the hints contained in it reveal that to us, is not characteristic of the days of the earlier monarchy, but of a much later age. More than once we have the phrase 'all that were before me in Jerusalem,' which, of course, could not be spoken by the historical Solomon. Again, this man seems to favour the poor and the cause of the oppressed (cf. iv. 1–3, v. 8, 9, ix. 16), which, in the form here presented at least, could not be characteristic of Solomon. In the passage iv. 13–16, which describes the poor and wise youth following the old and foolish king, and in ix. 13–15 about the poor wise man who saved the little city in the days of the grievous straits, we seem to have a reference to some actual historical situation, though it may not be possible absolutely to define it (see notes on the passages referred to). The whole circumstances thus indicated point to a period at least not earlier than that of the Persian rule, and more probably indicates the Greek period of the Ptolemys about B. C. 200. Some interpreters would place the book much later still, in the days, namely, of Herod the Great. The external history of the book and its final reception into the Hebrew canon seem to make the last date impossible, for there is some evidence of its being known earlier than the time of Herod, and its final admission into the canon was in A. D. 90, and it is scarcely likely that a book less than a century old would have been so honoured. Additional support to the theory of its having originated in the Greek period is derived from the language and thought of many passages. It may not be possible to maintain the position taken by Tyler and Plumptre, who hold that the writer shows intimate acquaintance with the systems of Greek philosophy, but it certainly seems as if he were familiar with Greek speculation, and that his language and ideas are coloured by what has reached him either through literature or personal intercourse.

A question of great interest and importance attaches to the integrity of the book. Every reader feels that the closing section is different in tone from all that precedes it. Particularly is this true of xii. 13, 14. The moral is forced, and it certainly does not appear to be a clear inference from all that has preceded it to say that the conclusion of the argument is 'fear God and keep His commandments, for this is the whole duty of man.' Much more appropriate would be the eighth verse, 'Vanity of vanities,' saith Koheleth, 'all is vanity.' The verses from ix onwards speak in the third person about the writer of the book, and are to some extent descriptive of his supposed aims and methods. They appear, indeed, to be an attempt to identify him with the writer of Proverbs, and may mark the critical judgement of the period when the book was struggling for a place in the canonical collection, or are the addition of some orthodox editor who felt that there were many valuable lessons in these pages which it was a pity to lose, but which could never become part of the Holy Scripture, unless a turn were given to them different from their obvious significance. The majority of students consequently consider this closing paragraph to be by a different hand from that which composed the bulk of the book. Siegfried, indeed, goes further, and attributes each two verses of the six to a separate hand. He, however, has a very elaborate theory of editorship, and considers that five separate editors have been engaged in the production of the book. The original writer, to whom is attributed the bulk of the work, is the man whose theory of the universe is that all is vanity. The work of this pure pessimist has been gone over by a man with epicurean tendencies who believes in life as being full of gaiety, and that it is a 'pleasant thing for the eyes to behold the sun.' The third hand is that of a sage who praises wisdom and its pursuit as more valuable than all else. To him is attributed such sayings as those found in vii. 11, 12, and 19. The fourth hand belongs to an orthodox Jew who seeks to correct the unorthodox conclusions of the first and second authors, and adds the pious reflection that we find in iii. 11–15 and elsewhere. To the fifth hand are attributed the proverbial sayings such as those found in iv. 9–12. Out of all this comparative chaos Siegfried thinks that a final editor has attempted to bring satisfactory order, but without great success. (A good account of this theory can be found in Siegfried's article 'Wisdom' in *HBD.*)

Bickell attempts to account for the seeming confusion of ideas by a theory of accident to the original manuscript. He supposes that the pages on which the book was originally written were wrongly folded—that this was not noticed, and that the book passed into circulation in this confused manner. It is not necessary here to give his ingenious rearrangement, because it is far too clever to be probable, and a fatal objection to the whole theory is to be found in the probability that books were then written in the form of a roll, not in the manner of a modern book, and that, therefore, the supposed accident could never have taken place. Haupt thinks the confusion of the traditional text may be 'partly accidental, partly intentional.' The original manuscript may have been left by the author without a final revision; he may have left a number of parallels and variants without indicating his final preference. This confusion was increased by the editorial changes introduced by the friends of the author, who published the work after his death. It was further increased by the polemical interpolations of the orthodox Pharisaic editors who finally admitted the book into the canon. Haupt's rearrangement of the book is very arbitrary, and will hardly appear convincing to any one else, though some of the alterations are ingenious, and it may even be granted that they improve the clearness of the thought.

It appears to the present writer that many of these attempts to rearrange the book arise from the false idea that one must discover in it a perfectly clear and continuous line of argument. It is more probable that the book consists of the scattered records of many moods, either in the form of a diary of inward experience, a record of the writer's thoughts on different occasions, and in altering circumstances, or—and this seems the most likely theory—that its pages contain a pupil's reminiscences of his master's teaching. In this latter case we are easily able to account for the different moods displayed in its pages, and also for the fact that the argument is sometimes abrupt and disjointed, and that sudden alternations occur in the subjects under discussion. If the book belongs to the former class, then excellent illustrations of its style of literature are to be found in the *Thoughts* of Pascal and Joubert, in the *Journal* of Amiel, or, to take a quite modern instance, in the *Papers of Henry Ryecroft*, by George Gissing. If the book belongs to the latter class, then we must look for illustrations to the *Discourses* of Epictetus, the *Memorabilia* of Xenophon, to the poem which in many ways stands closest to Ecclesiastes in all literature, namely, *The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam*, or, to take another quite modern instance, the lecture notes in *Silanus the Christian*, by Dr. Abbot. If we may further suppose that the lectures of the teacher covered a long period of years, and that his disciples' notes extended over the same period, or were written in order to give reminiscences of many years, the conditions are easily understood, and we shall not wonder so much at the changes of mood and the seeming contradictions. Such a theory does not, of course, exclude the possibility of there being annotations and corrections in the book from other hands, and some of the more obviously orthodox statements as well as the epilogue are almost certainly to be attributed to such a source. The view here taken of the book's origin would be considerably strengthened if we might with certainty adopt the explanation given by some interpreters that the title 'king' in i. 12 designates not a ruling monarch, but has the significance sometimes found in Jewish writings of a famous teacher. We must further remember that the character of the Hebrew wisdom or philosophy was not of that strict logical order with which we are familiar in ancient Greek and modern Western thought, in that the tendency of the Oriental thinker was to embody his reflections in the form of succint sayings that would not only be memorable to his scholars, but by their somewhat enigmatic form would stimulate further reflection (see further the General Introduction, p. 9).

LITERATURE FOR ECCLESIASTES.

The most charming English commentary is that of Plumptre in the *Cambridge Bible.* It must be read with caution because of the theory that underlies it, but in the wealth of its literary illustration and the charm of its style no book surpasses it. It also contains three valuable appendices on the relation of the book to Shakespeare, to Tennyson, and to Omar. Another commentary of the more popular sort, full of suggestive material, is that by Genung, entitled *Words of Koheleth.* For commentaries of a more scholarly order the student may be referred to Ginsburg, Wright, and Delitzsch, and also the suggestive work of Tyler, which formed the foundation upon which Plumptre built up his theory. The article in the *Enc. Bibl.* by Prof. Davidson and that in *HBD.* by Prof. Peake should also be consulted. It will be plain to the reader of this commentary that, so far as the teaching of the book goes, much depends upon the view of it that is taken, but there is still much valuable suggestion to be found in Cox's exposition in *The Expositor's Bible.* There is a small commentary with useful notes by Principal J. T. Marshall, published by the American Baptist Publication Society; and quite unique is Forbush's *Ecclesiastes in the metre of Omar Khayyam*, with a slight literary introduction. Of modern German commentaries those of Siegfried and Wildeboer are the most valuable, though Siegfried's peculiar position, as stated above, should be kept in mind. See also Moffatt's *Literary Illustrations to Ecclesiastes*, and the Commentary by Barton in the International Critical series, published too late for use in this work.

out sayings that would not only be memorable to his scholars, but by their somewhat enigmatic form would stimulate further reflection (see further the General Introduction p. 9).

LITERATURE FOR ECCLESIASTES

The most charming English commentary is that of Plumptre in the *Cambridge Bible*. It must be read with caution because of the theory that underlies it, but in the wealth of its literary illustration and the charm of its style no book surpasses it. It also contains three valuable appendices on the relation of the book to Shakespeare, to Tennyson, and to Omar. Another commentary of the more popular sort, full of suggestive material, is that by Genung, entitled *Words of Koheleth*. For commentaries of a more scholarly kind the student may be referred to Ginsburg, Wright, and Delitzsch, and also the suggestive work of Tyler, which formed the foundation upon which Plumptre built up his theory. The article in the *Enc. Bibl.* by Prof. Davidson and that in *Hast. D.B.* by Prof. Peake should also be consulted. It will be plain to the reader of this commentary that, so far as the teaching of the book goes, much depends upon the view of it that is taken, but there is still much valuable suggestion to be found in Cox's exposition in *The Expositor's Bible*. There is a small commentary with useful notes by Principal J. T. Marshall, published by the American Baptist Publication Society; and quite unique is Forbush's *Ecclesiastes in the Light of Omar Khayyam*, with a slight literary introduction. Of modern German commentaries those of Siegfried and Wildeboer are the most valuable, though Siegfried's peculiar position, as stated above, should be kept in mind. See also Moulton's *Literary Illustrations to Ecclesiastes*, and the Commentary by Barton in the International Critical series, published too late for use in this work.

ECCLESIASTES;

OR, THE PREACHER

THE words of [a] the Preacher, the son of David, king 1
in Jerusalem.

Vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher; vanity of 2

[a] Or, *the great orator* Heb. *Koheleth.*

---

i. **1. Preacher.** For the meaning of the word thus translated see Introduction, p. 212.

king. This is in apposition to preacher, not to David, so that it was understood, by the editor of the book at all events, that the writer was himself king of Jerusalem, or it is at any rate presented under that guise. If we can take it in the sense in which the word is used in the Talmud as equal to head of a school, then we can, perhaps, understand, how from verse 12 of this chapter the usage might by a mistake give rise to the present title.

i. 2-11. Since all things are vanity, what advantage comes to a man through all his days' work? There is one unceasing procession of human life which passes to the grave as regularly as the sun passes across the sky, the wind alters its course, or the rivers flow to the sea. A dreary and unsatisfied round is the tale of all existence, and there is neither novelty to be discovered in the future nor in the present grateful recollection of the past.

2. Vanity of vanities. This is the Hebrew expression for superlative vanity. The word 'vanity' occurs with impressive frequency throughout the book, sometimes in the phrase 'all is vanity,' as here, and at other times in the expression which we find first in verse 14.

One of the most recent literary illustrations of this refrain is the ballade of W. E. Henley, from which a verse is here quoted:

> 'Life is a smoke that curls—
> Curls in a flickering skein,
> That winds and whisks and whirls,
> A figment thin and vain,
> Into the vast Inane.
> One end for hut and hall!
> One end for cell and stall!

3 vanities, all is vanity. What profit hath man of all his
4 labour wherein he laboureth under the sun? One generation goeth, and another generation cometh; and
5 the earth abideth for ever. The sun also ariseth, and the sun goeth down, and hasteth to his place where he
6 ariseth. The wind goeth toward the south, and turneth

Burned in one common flame
Are wisdoms and insanities.
For this alone we came:
"O vanity of vanities!"'

3. under the sun. These are words which also recur frequently, and are probably borrowed from the Greek. They are the equivalent of our word 'sublunary,' which takes its metaphor from the moon.

4. One generation goeth. The first thought that occurs to the writer is the changefulness of all human life. It was no new idea, but one common to many human systems, and frequently expressed in the very metaphors here employed. A quaint echo of it is found in an epitaph on a grave in a Scottish churchyard:

'The earth builds on the earth
Castles and towers;
The earth saith to the earth,
"All shall be ours."
'The earth goeth on the earth,
Glistering like gold,
The earth goeth to the earth
Sooner than it wold.'

In contrast to the changing life of men, the author thinks of the earth as stable and an abiding background for the ever-varying pageantry of human life, which changes with such kaleidoscopic rapidity.

The sun also ariseth. The imagery here is that which was common to the people of the old world. The sun was regarded as running a race (cf. Ps. xix. 5), and probably the word translated 'hasteth' contains the figure of a horse panting in the chariot or a racehorse upon the racecourse.

6. The wind goeth. The reference to the north and south winds is found also in the Song of Songs ix. 16, and these two directions are probably named because they are the prevalent winds in Palestine. In the New Testament we have also a reference to the south wind in Luke xii. 55. The very form of the

about unto the north; it turneth about continually in its
course, and the wind returneth again to its circuits. All 7
the [a] rivers run into the sea, yet the sea is not full; unto
the place whither the rivers go, thither they go again.
[b] All things are full of weariness; man cannot utter *it*: 8
the eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear filled
with hearing. That which hath been is that which shall 9
be; and that which hath been done is that which shall

[a] Or, *torrents* [b] Or, *All words are feeble*

---

verse in the original, with its monotonous reiteration, suggests the weariness of all human endeavour.

7. All the rivers, &c. The word for 'rivers' is that which denotes a swiftly-flowing stream, as the ceaseless energy of Nature is chiefly in the writer's mind. Here is another excellent illustration of the endless circle of Nature's processes. It is a matter of debate whether the writer thinks of the process of evaporation, as modern science understands it, or whether he is writing under the conception of the idea of his age that the sea-water filtered through the earth, and, so cleansed, returned again to the sea in the springs and streams. The idea was a not uncommon one in classical poetry, and in Plumptre's commentary will be found excellent illustrations from Greek and Latin poets. A striking parallel is that in the *Clouds* of Aristophanes, line 1248:

> 'The sea, though all the rivers flow to it,
> Increaseth not in volume.'

8. All things are full of weariness. Since the Hebrew word rendered 'things' may also mean 'words,' the meaning of the phrase is uncertain. Many render 'all words are feeble,' and either meaning gives excellent sense. The reading of the text calls our attention to the ceaseless wearying round of the processes of Nature which has just been illustrated, while the other emphasizes the fact that no language or poet or orator is competent to express the wonder and the sadness of it. The following words 'man cannot utter it' seem rather to suggest that the second meaning is preferable. The final clauses of the verse imply that neither sight nor hearing is equal to the task laid upon it. The words of the Latin poet who spoke of one 'being wearied with a glut of vision' are a parallel case. Perhaps the thought that lies deeper still is that not even the complete story of the ex-

10 be done: and there is no new thing under the sun. Is
there a thing whereof men say, See, this is new? it hath

---

ternal universe, were it known, could possibly satisfy the human heart.

9. The writer now advances from the world of nature to the world of man, and for the first time we come across a form of expression that recurs frequently throughout the book—Life holds and can hold no novelty. See Dunbar's short and touching poem 'Of the Changes of Life,' especially the closing stanza:

> 'So nixt to symmer, winter bene;
> Nixt efter comfort, cairis kene;
> Nixt efter mydnycht, the myrthfull morrow;
> Next after joy, ay cumis sorrow:
> So is this warld, and ay hes bene.'

Cf. also the famous lines in *Macbeth*, v. 5. ll. 24–29.

10. See, this is new. The thought is further emphasized by the supposition that men will refuse to believe so sad a statement, and that the youth of every generation will claim novelty for their discovery; but the writer rejoins that some time in the past the most striking of supposed novelties has been anticipated. And this general statement is proved more or less by present-day discoveries. We who are proud of our modern civilization are continually discovering that many of our most vaunted novelties were known to the ancient world. Some years ago, for example, at a medical exhibition in Rome were shown surgical instruments from ancient Etruria which compared well with the latest productions of English and American makers, and some of the triumphs of Etruscan dentistry were not far behind present-day work. Words almost identical with those found here are found in Marcus Aurelius, e. g. 'They that come after us will see nothing new, and they who went before us saw nothing more than we have seen'; and, again, 'All things that come to pass now have come to pass before, and will come to pass hereafter.'—*Med.* xi. 1, vii. 26. It is true that not only a sorrowful but a joyful and courageous conclusion can be drawn from this doctrine. Dr. Moffat quotes a passage from Havelock Ellis in which this is well stated: 'The thing that has been is the thing that will be again; if we realize that, we may avoid many of the disillusions, miseries, and anxieties that for ever accompany the throes of new birth. Set your shoulder joyously to the world's wheel; you may spare yourself some unhappiness, if, beforehand, you slip the Book of Ecclesiastes beneath your arm.'

been already, in the ages which were before us. There 11
is no remembrance of the former *generations*; neither
shall there be any remembrance of the latter *generations*
that are to come, among those that shall come
after.

I [a] the Preacher was king over Israel in Jerusalem. 12
And I applied my heart to seek and to search out by 13
wisdom concerning all that is done under heaven; it is

[a] See ver. 1.

---

11. There is no remembrance, &c. He throws forward into the future what he has proved to be the experience of the past, and among the most bitter of his thoughts is that which leads him to forecast a future that holds no recollection of himself and his doings. It is a mood into which he often falls, and it is one that lends much bitterness to this type of philosophy. The stoic emperor also falls into it when he says 'posthumous fame is but oblivion'; and it finds a familiar utterance in the words of Hamlet, soliloquizing on the skull of Yorick:

'Imperious Caesar, dead and turned to clay,
Might stop a hole to keep the wind away:
Oh, that that earth, which kept the world in awe,
Should patch a wall to expel the winter's flaw!'

i. 12–18. In these verses are given the experience of the idealist king whose self-imposed task has been to search out the secrets of wisdom, and whose conclusion is that the wisest man cannot cure the world's woes, and that the end of all the highest endeavours of human thought is simply to increase the soul's burden of sorrow.

12. See Introduction, p. 218. The conclusion of Christina Rossetti's fine poem entitled 'The Testimony,' in which she embodies so much of the spirit of Ecclesiastes, may appropriately be quoted here:

'A king dwelt in Jerusalem;
He was the wisest man on earth;
He had all riches from his birth,
And pleasures till he tired of them;
Then, having tested all things, he
Witnessed that all are vanity.'

13. I applied my heart. This verse recurs several times throughout the book, and signifies the ardour of the writer's efforts to attain wisdom.

under heaven. This is a variant of his usual phrase 'under the sun.'

a sore travail that God hath given to the sons of men to
14 be exercised therewith. I have seen all the works that
are done under the sun; and, behold, all is vanity and
15 [a] a striving after wind. That which is crooked cannot
be made straight: and [b] that which is wanting cannot be
16 numbered. I communed with mine own heart, saying,

[a] Or, *a feeding on wind* (see Hos. xii. 1) Or, *vexation of spirit* and so elsewhere.

[b] Heb. *defect.*

---

a sore travail. This is the first hint of the thought that is common throughout the book, that God has set men hard and difficult tasks, and that in some ways the Divine control of life is by no means beneficent. In many of the moods of the writer God is recorded as a hard taskmaster.

14. I have seen all the works. Perhaps no sentence in the book is so truly pessimistic as this one, though many are more striking. Surely nothing can be sadder than to say that all the works of human enterprise are perfectly fruitless—that life, therefore, both theoretically and practically, is a mockery. The words are so sweeping and universal that nothing can escape the judgement here expressed. The last words of the verse constitute the first occurrence of the phrase that is so famous in the book, 'a striving after wind,' which forcibly suggests the purposelessness and ineffectiveness of all man's enterprises. The words may also be rendered 'a feeding on winds' as in Hosea xii. 1, and cf. also Prov. xv. 14. The thought of feeding or pasturing is the root idea of the verb, and, therefore, the latter translation may be preferable.

15. That which is crooked. Here the pessimistic mood is applied to the sphere of morals, and the writer declares that there is no making straight the crooked ways, or filling up the hollow places of life. At once the reader is reminded of the strong contrast this affords to the note of the evangelical prophet, 'the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain (Isa. xl. 4), though, of course, it would not be fair to suppose that any reference to that passage was in the writer's mind. His thought here, however, displays his fatalistic conception of life and of the Divine government. The second illustration, 'that which is wanting,' &c., is not so easily explained. It probably means 'a blank remains a blank,' and if an item is lacking in an account there is no making the sum correct. A very slight change in the original would give the meaning 'that which lacks cannot be filled up,' which is, perhaps, a little more clear; but the alteration is not requisite and cannot be certain.

Lo, I have gotten me great wisdom [a] above all that were before me [b] in Jerusalem: yea, my heart [c] hath had great experience of wisdom and knowledge. And I applied 17 my heart to know wisdom, and to know madness and folly: I perceived that this also was a striving after wind. For in much wisdom is much grief: and he that in- 18 creaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow.

I said in mine heart, Go to now, I will prove thee with 2

[a] Or, *yea, more than all* [b] Heb. *over.*
[c] Heb. *hath seen abundantly.*

---

16. in Jerusalem. There is no doubt that the better translation is 'over Jerusalem,' but there is no need to look for historical accuracy in the statement, and those who would understand the reference to be to the Jebusite rulers who preceded David in that stronghold are certainly on a wrong track. The words are either to be understood purely ideally or, as above explained, of a teacher.

17. to know wisdom, and to know madness and folly. According to the ordinary reading of the Hebrew text, the author now sets himself to discover truth through the study of contraries. He will not be contented by merely investigating wisdom. He will also make search into the pathology of the human mind. This is very modern in tone, for many of the modern psychological discoveries have been made by studying the aberrations of the human mind, and in this direction, perhaps, more may be done in the future. According, however, to the text of the LXX, all reference to madness is omitted, and in place of madness and folly 'parables and science' are read. A very slight change in the Hebrew words would give rise to this altered translation, but it is probably incorrect.

18. in much wisdom is much grief. This is a cynical, and perhaps mockingly cynical, conclusion of the section, since, as Wildeboer points out, it is equivalent to praising folly, which was probably not the real thought of the writer when he was at his best.

ii. 1–11. The writer now describes another mood, the epicurean one, and tells how he spent money and effort in the provision of every kind of luxury, beauty, and adornment, wealth and riches, and every means of pleasure and recreation. He did not withhold from himself anything that might tempt the senses and appetites; but the end of it all was once more vanity and weariness.

mirth; [a]therefore enjoy [b]pleasure: and, behold, this
2 also was vanity. I said of laughter, It is mad: and of
3 mirth, What doeth it? I searched in mine heart how to
cheer my flesh with wine, mine heart yet [c]guiding *me*
with wisdom, and how to lay hold on folly, till I might

[a] Or, *and thou shalt enjoy* [b] Or, *good*
[c] Or, *holding its course*

Dunbar's poem *Of the Warldis Vanity* has caught much of the spirit of this chapter. See the last stanza in particular:

'Heir nocht abydis, heir standis no thing stabill,
For this fals warld ay flittis to and fro;
Now day up-bricht, now nycht als blak as sabill;
Now eb, now flude, now freynd, now cruell fo;
Now glaid, now said, now weill, now in-to wo;
Now cleid in gold, dessolvit now in ass;
So dois this warld ay transitorie go;
Vanitas Vanitatum, et omnia Vanitas.'

1. Go to now. We cannot but be reminded of the parable in Luke xii, and the words there addressed by the rich man to himself. The form of the address here rather suggests the mocking character of the whole appeal, and the bitterness of the experience he is about to relate.

2. laughter. Laughter and mirth are here personified, but it is the laughter of a shallow order; cf. vii. 6 and Prov. xiv. 13. It is with these words that Miss Rossetti begins her poem quoted on i. 12.

3. to cheer my flesh with wine. The spirit of the whole passage is admirably expressed in the mocking verse of Omar:

'You know, my friends, with what a brave carouse
I made a second marriage in my house;
Divorced old barren reason from my bed,
And took the daughter of the vine to spouse.'

Many verses of the famous Persian poet echo the same sentiment, and it was no uncommon thought that, as the Latin verse phrases it, truth was to be found in the wine-cup, and many felt with Omar—

'I wonder often what the vintners buy
One half so precious as the stuff they sell.'

mine heart yet guiding me. The writer impresses upon us the fact that he did not permit himself to sink under sensual pleasures, but deliberately yielded himself to their delights for the purpose of experimenting upon their results.

see what it was good for the sons of men that they should
do under the heaven [a] all the days of their life. I made 4
me great works; I builded me houses; I planted me
vineyards; I made me gardens and parks, and I planted 5
trees in them of all kinds of fruit: I made me pools of 6
water, to water therefrom the forest where trees were
reared: I bought menservants and maidens, and had 7
servants born in my house; also I had great possessions
of herds and flocks, above all that were before me in
Jerusalem: I gathered me also silver and gold, and the 8
peculiar treasure of kings and of the provinces: I gat me
men singers and women singers, and the delights of the

[a] Heb. *the number of the days of their life.*

4-8. In these verses the writer describes his various buildings and laying out of pleasure gardens and acquiring of varied possessions. The commentators generally illustrate from the narratives of the grandeur of Solomon's court described in the Books of Kings and Chronicles, and very probably the fame of these lies behind the descriptions here given; but there seems little use in particularizing them, since there is no probability that Solomon himself has anything to do with this work. The word rendered 'provinces' in verse 8 is confined to the later Hebrew, and probably signifies here that all lands were laid under contribution, as in the descriptions of the luxurious courts of the Roman emperors. The latter part of verse 8 is the only one that affords any difficulty, and the men and women singers therein mentioned are no doubt entertainers who added to the delights of the feasts in the palace, and the further description 'delights of the sons of men' is probably a general description for all kinds of sensual pleasures, though with special reference to the indulgence of sensual desires. The closing words rendered 'concubines very many' are the most difficult. The word rendered 'concubines' is really of unknown meaning, and numerous conjectures have been made as to its translation. The A. V. renders 'musical instruments,' following Luther. The LXX has 'cup-bearers,' following an Aramaic root meaning to 'pour out,' while certain of the Hebrew paraphrases suggest 'baths.' Some have tried to find a more general meaning in the thought of splendour as shown in heaps of treasure, while, again, 'chariot' and 'palanquin' have been suggested, and even demons male and female,

9 sons of men, [a] concubines very many. So I was great, and increased more than all that were before me in
10 Jerusalem: also my wisdom [b] remained with me. And whatsoever mine eyes desired I kept not from them: I withheld not my heart from any joy, for my heart rejoiced because of all my labour; and this was my
11 portion from all my labour. Then I looked on all the works that my hands had wrought, and on the labour that I had laboured to do: and, behold, all was vanity and a striving after wind, and there was no profit under the sun.

[a] Or, *musical instruments, and that of all sorts* The Sept. and Syriac render, *cupbearers, male and female.* The meaning of the Hebrew is very uncertain.

[b] Or, *stood by me*

---

the latter word in Hebrew having a close resemblance to this one. Another similar word is the word for 'breast,' and that significance has been given to it here, it being supposed to stand by figure of speech for woman. The most recent commentators adduce an Assyrian root which means 'love,' and render the words 'pearls of the harem.' In some form or other this latter is the most likely meaning. He had ransacked all lands for beautiful women wherewith to fill his palace. 'Very many' is probably a sufficiently accurate rendering, the idea being that possession is piled upon possession, and so a multitude is signified.

9. remained. More literally, 'sit beside me.' Here we have Wisdom personified as if she was a female monitress, and may perhaps purposely be contrasted with the women of pleasure mentioned in the previous verse. This personifying of Wisdom is common throughout the Wisdom literature.

10. my portion. This expression recurs in other passages of the book, and means more likely reward—his reward, that is to say, was in the very joy of the search he was engaged upon.

A very pertinent and pathetic parallel is to be found in the pages of Oscar Wilde's *De Profundis*, where he writes: 'There was no pleasure I did not experience. I threw the pearl of my life into a cup of wine. I went down the primrose path to the sound of flutes. I lived on honeycomb.'

11. Then I looked. Here is apparently a sharp contrast to the words he has just used. The joy was transient, and the end vanity. See Dr. Moffatt's striking quotation from Taine.

And I turned myself to behold wisdom, and madness 12
and folly: for what *can* the man *do* that cometh [a] after
the king? *even* that which hath been already done.
Then I saw that wisdom excelleth folly, as far as light 13
excelleth darkness. The wise man's eyes are in his head, 14
and the fool walketh in darkness: and yet I perceived
that one event happeneth to them all. Then said I in 15

[a] Or, *after the king, even him whom they made king long ago?* Or, *after the king, in those things which have been already done?*

12–17. These verses recapitulate in large measure with fuller illustration (cf. i. 1–18). The main thought that is new is the proclamation of the great inherent superiority of wisdom to folly, but yet the end is alike to both; and the practical conclusion is that life is cruel and mocking.

12. what can the man do, &c. Siegfried places the second half of this verse immediately after verse 11, to which, it must be confessed, it forms a very appropriate conclusion. If the king has failed in finding real satisfaction out of a life of pleasure—the king who has had such unique opportunities of crowding his life with every possibility of gratification—how can any lesser man hope to succeed where he has failed? Further than the position of the words, however, there is a question about their meaning. The LXX reads a different text, and translates, 'What man will follow after counsel in whatsoever things they wrote it'—which certainly seems unintelligible, while the Vulgate renders, 'What is man that he should follow the King his Maker?' understanding the reference of God; but this is also impossible. Many, however, render the words 'What can the man do who comes after the king whom they made long ago?' making the sentence refer definitely to Solomon; or otherwise, 'What can the man do that comes after the king in those things which have been already done?' Either the rendering of the text or the last of the variations given seems to be the most probable.

14. The wise man's eyes are in his head. Cf. the saying of Jesus, Matt. vi. 23: 'If, therefore, the light that is in them be darkness, how great is the darkness!' and Miss Rossetti's poem:

'The one inheritance, which best
And worst alike shall find and share:
The wicked cease from troubling there,
And there the weary are at rest;
There all the wisdom of the wise
Is vanity of vanities.'

my heart, As it happeneth to the fool, so will it happen
even to me; and why was I then more wise? Then I
16 said in my heart, that this also was vanity. For of the
wise man, even as of the fool, there is no remembrance
for ever; seeing that in the days to come all will have
been already forgotten. And how doth the wise man
17 die even as the fool! So I hated life; because the work
that is wrought under the sun was grievous unto me: for
all is vanity and a striving after wind.

18 And I hated all my labour wherein I laboured under
the sun: seeing that I must leave it unto the man that
19 shall be after me. And who knoweth whether he shall
be a wise man or a fool? yet shall he have rule over all
my labour wherein I have laboured, and wherein I have
shewed wisdom under the sun. This also is vanity.
20 Therefore I turned about to cause my heart to despair
concerning all the labour wherein I had laboured under
21 the sun. For there is a man whose labour is with wisdom,

---

15. more wise. These words signify, 'Why should I attempt to be too wise?' and have the cynical meaning that even excess of wisdom is folly, and the labour involved not worth while.

16. wise man die even as the fool. This is another proof that the writer had no confident hope in immortality, and that the end of all men was to him alike dark and sad.

17. So I hated life. These words are a strong expression of the writer's feeling towards life's mysteries and its baffling contradictions, and mark him out as, for the time being at least, a pessimist.

18-23. The writer here expresses for the first time a thought that recurs several times later in the book, namely, that all his efforts may be destroyed by the folly of his successor; and this fate turns all the wise man's best efforts to a cup of bitterness.

18. seeing that I must leave it. The first saddening thought is that those things in which he takes most interest must very soon be left—an idea that has embittered the lives of many great and rich men (see the instances given by Plumptre on this verse).

20. I turned about to cause to . . . despair. This is a Hebrew expression which apparently has the simple meaning, 'I began to despair.'

and with knowledge, and with [a] skilfulness; yet to a man that hath not laboured therein shall he [b] leave it for his portion. This also is vanity and a great evil. 22 For what hath a man of all his labour, and of the [c] striving of his heart, wherein he laboureth under the sun? 23 For all his days are *but* sorrows, and his travail is grief; yea, even in the night his heart taketh no rest. This also is vanity.

24 There is nothing better for a man *than* that he should

[a] Or, *success* [b] Heb. *give.* [c] Or, *vexation*

---

21. For there is. This should probably be rendered, as a hypothetical sentence, 'If there is a man,' &c.

skilfulness. This word signifies the cuteness that brings with it material success, and the close of the verse reverts to the galling thought that all his riches may become the portion of a man who does not value them because he has not toiled for them.

24–26. The meaning of this short section is not quite clear, because the Hebrew is uncertain; but, on the interpretation taken in the notes, the general thought is that all enjoyment depends ultimately upon God, who gives good gifts to the righteous, but strips the sinner of his possessions in order that the righteous may be enriched by them—forming thus an illustration of the law laid down by Christ, 'And to every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not, even that which he hath shall be taken away.'

24. There is nothing better. This translation depends upon a correction of the Hebrew which is accepted by almost every editor. The words as they stand in the received text would mean 'there is no good in a man's eating and drinking'; but this is contrary to the thought of the context. The R.V. translation probably represents the meaning of the corrected text as well as anything. It does not seem possible to interpret the words as Plumptre does (with many beautiful and appropriate illustrations) of the simple life, because there is no sufficient evidence that the writer here confines his thought to the mere necessities of existence, but that he is praising all the enjoyment that can be got out of life.[1] The

---

[1] Cf. Dunbar's lines:

'Man, pleiss thy makar and be mirry,
And sett not by this warld a chirry.'

And also Henry VIII's song:

'Then who can say
But mirth and play
Is best of all?'

eat and drink, and make his soul enjoy good in his labour.
25 This also I saw, that it is from the hand of God. For
who can eat, or who can [a] have enjoyment, [b] more than
26 I? For to the man that pleaseth him *God* giveth wisdom,
and knowledge, and joy: but to the sinner he giveth travail,
to gather and to heap up, that he may give to him that
pleaseth God. This also is vanity and a striving after
wind.

3 To every thing there is a season, and a time to every

[a] Or, *hasten* thereto

[b] According to some ancient authorities, *apart from him.*

---

statement with which the verse closes is regarded by many as a pious note of a later editor, and it certainly does not seem quite appropriate to the prevalent mood of the writer, and is in particular out of accord with the close of verse 26.

25. In this verse there are two or three expressions that are difficult in Hebrew, and have been altered in the older versions, which latter are generally followed by modern editors. The most important are the words 'more than I.' If this is retained then the verse constitutes a boastful utterance of the writer that no one can ever know more of life's pleasures than he. Thus to understand the verse almost necessitates the further conclusion that the pious reflections of verses 24 and 26 are not from the same hand. Perhaps for this reason the words have been altered to read 'without him,' meaning that no pleasure in life is possible unless God sanctions it. Further, the words rendered 'have enjoyment' may also mean 'hasten.' If the latter meaning is taken, it must refer to the eager pursuit of pleasure. The LXX renders it 'drink,' but this seems to have arisen from a mistake as to the significance of the original word.

26. This verse, indicating the nature of the Divine government according to the thought of the pious Israelite, is out of harmony with the context, unless we are to suppose it to be a mocking statement of that judgement. It is scarcely probable that the writer would go so far, and it is easier to suppose that another hand has been here at work (for the idea conveyed, cf. Job xxvii. 16, 17, and Prov. xiii. 22).

iii. 1–15. This section may be called the Praise of Opportunism. It begins with the well-known list of times and seasons, and then proceeds to say that while God has thus set limits to all life, He has

[a] purpose under the heaven: a time to be born, and a 2
time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up that
which is planted; a time to kill, and a time to heal; a 3
time to break down, and a time to build up; a time to 4
weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time
to dance; a time to cast away stones, and a time to 5

[a] Or, *matter*

---

placed an unsatisfied longing in the hearts of men which the regularity of the world seems to mock. The perfection of God's work renders human tasks poor by contrast, and yet by their very nature men are constrained to attempt them.

1. a season and a time. In strictness these words would be better reversed, seeing that in English 'season' is more particular than 'time,' and refers more accurately to a definite period. Purpose might be better rendered 'business.' There are some editors who understand the reference to be not so much to the appointed seasons for the events named as to the transiency of all the experiences of human life: thus Haupt translates, 'All lasts but a while, and transient is everything under the sky'; but the whole form of the passage and the lesson drawn from it seems against this idea. In the original manuscripts the contrasted words form two separate lists, and are in that way more clear and emphatic. Similar 'tables of contrast' were known to the Greeks. The whole teaching of the section is summed up in the well-known passage of *Julius Caesar*:

> 'There is a tide in the affairs of men
> Which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune;
> Omitted, all the remnant of their lives
> Is bound in shallows and in miseries.'

Popular proverbs have also enshrined the same teaching, as, for example, 'The mill cannot grind with the water that is past.'

2. pluck up. It has been suggested that, as this word is an uncommon one, and is elsewhere used figuratively of the destruction of cities, the figurative and not the natural sense is the one here. But inasmuch as all the other sets of words in the list are obviously to be taken in their natural sense, this is likely to be so understood also.

3. Cf. Jer. i. 10, and, as Plumptre does by way of illustration, Gal. ii. 18 and 2 Kings v. 26.

4. We are naturally reminded here of our Lord's contrast between Himself and John the Baptist (see Matt. ii. 16-19).

5. to cast away stones. This would, perhaps, be better rendered

gather stones together ; a time to embrace, and a time to
6 refrain from embracing ; a time to seek, and a time to
7 lose ; a time to keep, and a time to cast away ; a time to
rend, and a time to sew ; a time to keep silence, and a
8 time to speak ; a time to love, and a time to hate ; a time
9 for war, and a time for peace. What profit hath he that
10 worketh in that wherein he laboureth? I have seen the
travail which God hath given to the sons of men to be
11 exercised therewith. He hath made every thing beautiful
in its time: also he hath set [a] the world in their heart,

[a] Or, *eternity*

'scatter,' and may refer to the practice described in 2 Kings iii. 19, 25, of destroying the fertile fields of an enemy by putting stones over them. In this case the reverse process might refer to the clearing of ground for the purpose of planting in it.

a time to refrain. This may refer to times of distress in war or other public calamity, or to some occasion of solemn fasting (cf. Joel ii. 16 and 1 Cor. vii. 29–31). The latter passage almost suggests that Paul had these verses in mind.

6. This verse finds excellent illustration in our Lord's famous paradox, 'Whosoever will lose his life shall find it,' as well as in the parable of the merchantman seeking a goodly pearl, Matt. xiii. 45, 46.

8. a time for war. This alteration in form corresponds to the original, where also the infinitive is changed to a noun, probably as marking the conclusion of the series.

9. What profit. The result of the long enumeration is to suggest that man is baffled by the very sense of the fitness of things and his own inability to seize the proper moment.

11. every thing beautiful. This reminds us of the words in Gen. xxxi, 'And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good.' Siegfried refers appropriately to the Hebrew fragment of Ecclesiasticus given in the *Expositor*, 5th series, vol. iv, p. 8, which is a variation of the text in chap. xxxix of that book. One verse in particular may be quoted, 'None may say this is bad ; what is it? for everything is good in its season.'

the world. The word in the original is that which is generally translated 'for ever,' and signifies 'eternity.' Some have taken it, however, to mean 'the hidden thing,' and would render 'obscurity' here, as if God had put a veil upon men's hearts so that they could not read the riddle of life. By a slight change in the original

yet so that man cannot find out the work that God hath
done from the beginning even to the end. I know that 12
there is nothing better for them, than to rejoice, and [a] to
do good so long as they live. And also that every man 13
should eat and drink, and enjoy good in all his labour, is
the gift of God. I know that, whatsoever God doeth, it 14
shall be for ever: nothing can be put to it, nor any thing
taken from it: and God hath done it, that men should
fear before him. [b] That which is hath been already; 15

[a] Or, *to get good*

[b] Or, *That which hath been is now*

---

some have understood 'wisdom,' but this is improbable. Again, it has been suggested that we are to understand the translation 'age' to signify that the heart of man is a kind of mirror of all the changing fashions of life. This idea seems to belong to a later time, and we do better to rest on the first translation, 'eternity,' and to understand it as referring to the mystery of longings after a life greater and fuller than any the world holds, which is the strength while it is also the sorrow of human life. To the writer this does not constitute a witness for a higher life beyond the present, but only an added burden in an existence that is already overweighted with problems. For the fact of the presence of these longings in the human heart is simply to baffle it, so that 'man cannot find out the work that God hath done from the beginning even to the end.'

12. to do good. There is not sufficient evidence that the Hebrew phrase ever bore this ethical significance, and it is more probable that it simply means 'to enjoy themselves'; so that the whole verse echoes in thought ii. 24.

13. the gift of God. By the addition of these words the epicurean turn of the passage is lifted into a somewhat higher realm by this statement that God is the source of all our pleasures; but in the opinion of many editors both this and the next verse are from the hand of the more orthodox reviser of the book.

14. God hath done it. Here the changelessness of the Divine purpose and the perfection of the Divine work are made the ground of men's trust in Him. It is a profoundly religious idea, and one that is familiar to the writers of the later Judaism, but whether it is appropriate to the dominant mood of this book may be questioned. One is reminded of the profound saying of Amiel, 'All is well, my God surrounds me.'

and that which is to be hath already been: and God seeketh again that which is [a] passed away.

16 And moreover I saw under the sun, in the place of judgement, that wickedness was there; and in the place
17 of righteousness, that wickedness was there. I said in mine heart, God shall judge the righteous and the wicked: for there is a time there for every [b] purpose and for every
18 work. [c] I said in mine heart, *It is* because of the sons of men, that God may prove them, and that they may
19 see that they themselves are *but as* beasts. For [d] that which befalleth the sons of men befalleth beasts; even

[a] Heb. *driven away.* [b] Or, *matter*

[c] Or, *I said in mine heart concerning the sons of men,* It is *that God &c.*

[d] Or, *the sons of men are a chance, and the beasts are a chance, and one &c.*

---

15. is passed away. God brings back again that which to all seeming has vanished, and, so the writer hints, the endless round begins again. There is no real end, whatever appearances may suggest. Several of the old versions, followed by some modern editors, read 'persecuted.' The words would then mean that God protects the persecuted. This is in itself a possible rendering, but it does not seem at all appropriate to the context.

16–22. This section more frankly than before, and without any gloss from more orthodox hands, states an epicurean doctrine. The fresh points of the argument are drawn from the writer's noticing the frequent perversion of justice, and this, he thinks, is the outcome of the Divine mockery of human attempts at wise and righteous conduct.

17. for there is a time. By a very slight alteration in the Hebrew this can be rendered, 'for He has appointed a time,' and this may very probably be the real sense.

18. because of the sons of men. These words should probably be closely connected with the preceding ones, thus, 'I said in mine heart concerning the sons of men.' The obvious meaning of the words is that man and beast are so absolutely under the Divine government that no distinctions can be made between them; and apparently the purpose is to humble the pride of human wisdom.

19. that which befalleth. The rendering of the margin more accurately represents the meaning of the original, namely, 'the sons of men are a chance,' &c.; but by the slightest change the

one thing befalleth them : as the one dieth, so dieth the other ; yea, they have all one [a] breath ; and man hath no pre-eminence above the beasts : for all is vanity. All go 20
unto one place ; all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again. Who knoweth the spirit [b] of man [c] whether it 21
goeth upward, and the spirit of the beast [c] whether it

[a] Or, *spirit* [b] Heb. *of the sons of men.* [c] Or, *that goeth*

---

ordinary Hebrew text makes it read 'the lot of men is the same as that of the beasts, &c.,' that is to say, it is not quite so hopelessly fatalistic as the undoubtedly correct reading makes it. Plumptre quotes well a saying of Solon given by Herodotus : 'Man is altogether a chance.'

as the one dieth. We may compare the thought of Ps. xlix. 12 and 20, where we are told that man is 'like the beasts that perish,' only that in these passages it is the man who lacks understanding that is so spoken of ; that is, the lot of the righteous is contrasted with the lot of the sinner, and it is only the latter who has such a hopeless outlook. Here the writer seems to have no gleam of the hope of immortality, or he may be, as some think, uttering a protest against the argument for immortality which at his time was becoming a prominent doctrine amongst Jewish thinkers, and at a later period was one of the most pronounced tenets of the Pharisees.

they have all one breath. This seems to refer to the words in Gen. ii. 7, and may be taken as an indignant protest against the theory there stated that the breath of life bestowed upon man was something different in character from that which the animal world enjoyed.

20. Cf. i. 4 and note, and also Omar :

'Ah ! make the most of what we yet may spend,
Before we too into the Dust descend ;
Dust into Dust, and under Dust to lie,
Sans Wine, *sans* Song, *sans* Singer, and *sans* End.'

21. Who knoweth, &c. In this verse the writer professes an absolute agnosticism as to the fate of the human spirit. He cannot utter any definite decision as to whether it has any advantage over that of the beast or not. His standpoint is not absolutely that of the Sadducees, but it comes very near to it. His despair is not quite so dark as that of the Persian poet who writes :

'A Muezzin from the towers of darkness cries
"Fools, your reward is neither Here nor There !"'

22 goeth downward to the earth? Wherefore I saw that there is nothing better, than that a man should rejoice in his works; for that is his portion: for who shall bring him *back* to see what shall be after him?

4 Then I returned and saw all the oppressions that are done under the sun: and behold, the tears of such as were oppressed, and they had no comforter; and on the side of their oppressors there was power, but they had
2 no comforter. Wherefore I praised the dead which are already dead more than the living which are yet alive;
3 yea, [a] better than them both *did I esteem* him which hath

---

[a] Or, *better than they both is he which &c.*

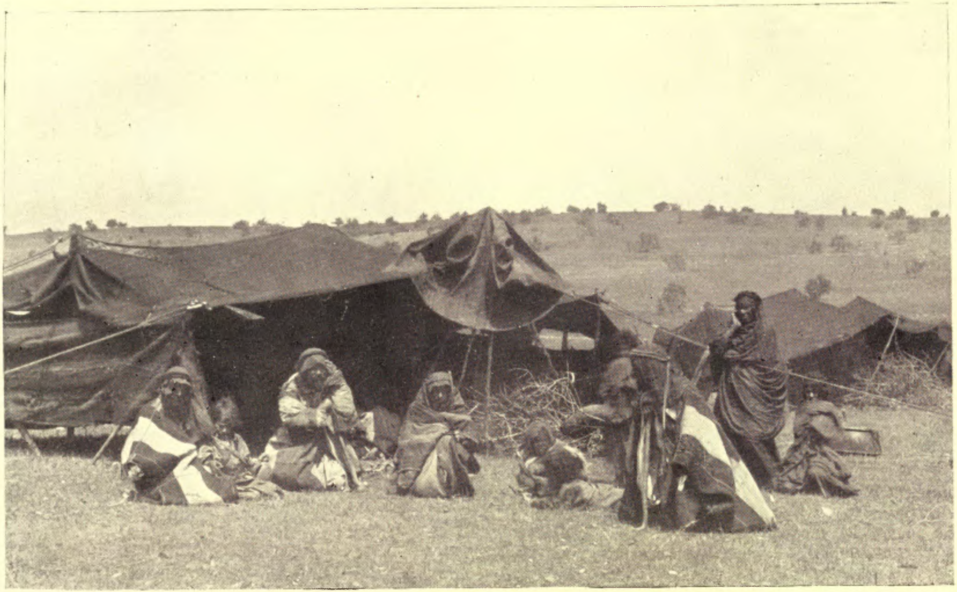
22. Cf. verse 13 above. Siegfried thinks that this verse proceeds from the more optimistic epicurean writer who has added occasional notes in the book. This conclusion is not necessary, however, and we can feel that the words express the best practical result that the somewhat dreary philosophy of the writer permits, and that anyhow he takes a higher ground than many of his brother epicureans.

iv. 1. They had no comforter. These words, it will be noticed, are repeated twice in the verse, first with reference to the oppressed, and secondly to their oppressors. In the second case the word may probably mean 'avenger,' as other forms of the verb in the original have that meaning, and there may either be a slight mistake in the word, or this form may have borne the meaning, though we have no other evidence of it. The whole circumstances revealed by the verse are those of a society where tyranny prevailed, and are probably more true of the Greek period of Jewish history than of any other.

2. Wherefore I praised the dead. Cf. for the thought of this verse and the next Job iii. 11-26. The writer feels that many have been happy in the moment of their death who have not lived to see the miseries that distress him.

3. Better than them both. This idea is also found in the above passage in Job, as also in vi. 3 below, and is memorably expressed, in a famous chorus, by Sophocles:

'Never to be at all
Excels all fame;



The Tents of Kedar

not yet been, who hath not seen the evil work that is done under the sun.

Then I saw all labour and every [a] skilful work, that 4
[b] for this a man is envied of his neighbour. This also is vanity and a striving after wind. The fool foldeth his 5
hands together, and eateth his own flesh. Better is an 6
handful [c] with quietness, than two handfuls [c] with labour and striving after wind.

---

[a] Or, *successful*

[b] Or, *it cometh of a man's rivalry with his neighbour* [c] Or, *of*

Quickly, next best, to pass
From whence we came.' *Oed. Col.* 1,225.

The thought of the verse probably reverts back to that of iii. 21.

4. This verse is more clearly understood if the marginal rendering is taken. We might then render it, 'Then I saw the end of all toil and of every successful work, that it cometh of a man's rivalry with his neighbour.' It is curious to find how very modern this conception is. It would make a splendid motto for a Socialist address against the evils of competition.

5. The fool foldeth his hands. The thought here seems to be that if the eager strife of competition is vanity, equally bad is laziness. Some think that the verse may represent a current proverb. The most difficult words to interpret are the closing ones, 'eateth his own flesh.' Some understand it of securing his own meals, and that thus the idea is that even the lazy man manages somehow to get enough to eat, and so is as well off as the hard worker, and has not to suffer the penalties that attach to the strenuous life. But it seems better to understand the words of self-destruction. The lazy man starves himself, and comes to an untimely end. The best illustrations of the use of the phrase are to be found in Micah iii. 3 and Isa. xlix. 26, rather than in the somewhat cannibalistic references that are frequently given to illustrate it, such as Isa. ix. 20, &c.

6. This verse seems to strike the mean between the two former ones, and to suggest that the wisest lot is that of the man who is content with little and does not expose himself to the rivalries of the eager world. The first word rendered 'handful' really signifies the hollow of the open hand, while the second signifies the grasped and closed fist. It seems, therefore, that the writer means that it is better to rest satisfied with what is gently placed into the outstretched hand than eagerly to grasp with both hands that for which one has to struggle. If, however, we translate 'of' instead

7, 8 Then I returned and saw vanity under the sun. There is one that is alone, and he hath not a second; yea, he hath neither son nor brother; yet is there no end of all his labour, neither are his eyes satisfied with riches. For whom then, *saith he*, do I labour, and deprive my soul of good? This also is vanity, yea, it is a sore travail.
9 Two are better than one; because they have a good
10 reward for their labour. For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow: but woe to him that is alone when he
11 falleth, and hath not another to lift him up. Again, if two lie together, then they have warmth: but how can
12 one be warm *alone*? And if a man prevail against him that is alone, two shall withstand him; and a threefold cord is not quickly broken.

---

of 'with,' in both clauses, the meaning is somewhat different, but this rendering is not so probable.

8. This is a most dramatic and almost pathetic description of a lonely miser, who is never satisfied with the amount he amasses, and yet feels (cf. ii. 18, 19) the bitterness of not knowing who is to be his heir, and what use will be made of the property which has cost so much to win.

9–12. These verses constitute a short section on the advantages of partnership, or, as generally taken, on the benefits of friendship. It is not clear that the higher relations of friendship are necessarily implied. The writer seems rather to look to the gains derivable from concerted action, but it may without much difficulty be applied as a parable of friendship. Plumptre's commentary should be consulted on this passage for the fine selection of literary illustrations, and the student should not omit Bacon's essay on 'Friendship.' The illustrations in verses 10, 11, and 12 are probably taken from the exigencies of Oriental travel, namely, the dangers of slipping on bad roads, of having at night as covering only the cloak worn during the day, and of perils at the hand of robbers.

12. A threefold cord. The sudden advance from two to three at the close of this verse is probably nothing more than an emphatic conclusion of the section, or it may be parallel to the numerical proverb such as those found in Prov. xxx. It constitutes a kind of *a fortiori* argument. The fanciful interpretations that have been given to the words have, of course, no foundation in the meaning of the passage.

Better is a poor and wise youth than an old and foolish 13
king, who knoweth not how to receive admonition any
more. For out of prison he came forth to be king; [a] yea, 14
even in his kingdom he was born poor. I saw all the 15
living which walk under the sun, that they were with the
youth, the second, that stood up in his stead. [b] There 16
was no end of all the people, even of all them over whom
he was: yet they that come after shall not rejoice in him.
Surely this also is vanity and a striving after wind.

[c] Keep thy foot when thou goest to the house of God; 5

[a] According to some ancient versions, *whereas* the other *though born in his kingdom became poor.*

[b] Or, *There is no end, in the mind of all the people, to all that hath been before them; they also &c.*

[c] [Ch. iv. 17 in Heb.]

13-16. This section seems to have some exact historical situation in view, but just what that situation is scholars are unable to determine. Many various solutions have been attempted, but all of them are open to objection. Various historical situations in Jewish history from the days of Joseph to those of Herod have been adduced as fitting the circumstances. One of the most recent solutions, and perhaps as probable as any, is that of P. Haupt, who regards the youth as Alexander Balas (see 1 Macc. x. 47) and the old king as Antiochus Epiphanes. He thinks that this also suits the reference to 'the second' in verse 15, seeing that Demetrius was the first successor of Antiochus, who was set aside in favour of Alexander. The wisest course, however, may be to say that we do not know enough about the exact period when the book was written to enable us to come to any confident conclusion. The practical lesson that the writer draws from the incident is the familiar one of the vanity of it all, this time based on the consideration that the fickle multitude who to-day crowd to honour their momentary favourite will to-morrow forget him, and in the strange lottery of the rapid alternations of rival monarchs to which the age was liable new rulers will bring new favourites, and the state itself in all probability be turned topsy-turvy (cf. Browning's poem, 'The Patriot').

16. over whom he was. This is probably more accurately 'before whom he was,' and refers to his leadership of the people (see 1 Sam. xviii. 16).

v. **1.** This verse is placed in the original, and in the old versions

for to draw nigh to hear is better than to give the sacrifice
2 of fools: for they know not that they do evil. [a] Be not

[a] [Ch. v. 1 in Heb.]

---

as the last verse of the preceding chapter, but obviously its connexion is with what follows rather than with what precedes. The writer turns now to acts of worship and to the fulfilment of vows, and shows that in both of these matters the only wise course is to hold the fear of God before one's eyes. So rapid and thorough is the change of thought that Siegfried and others feel the passage must be attributed to another hand; and certainly it is very difficult to fit the section in with what precedes and follows it. It is possible that originally the passage consisted of some such general advice on the subject of vows as is now found in verse 4, based upon a kind of common-sense view of man's relation to God that did not imply very high religious ideas, and that this has been worked over by some other hand, and ultimately given its more orthodox form.

Keep thy foot. This, of course, is a reference to the Oriental idea of reverential behaviour which consists of taking off the shoes on entering a sacred place, and hence figuratively the phrase is employed of a correct demeanour and spirit in worship (cf. for contrast Isa. i. 12). Professor Margoliouth, in *The Expositor*, Feb. 1, 1908, suggests that this verse should be translated 'Walk carefully as thou goest to the House of God, and one that is ready to hear is better than fools offering sacrifice—for they know not to do evil'; and then further regards it as the origin of Ecclus. vii. 14 and xxviii. 2. In the latter verse he thinks the words 'one that is ready to hear' are interpreted as referring to the man of a forgiving spirit.

the house of God. In Ps. lxxiii. 17 we have the nearest analogy in the words 'the sanctuary of God.' Whether the reference here is to the Temple or to the Synagogue is uncertain. Wildeboer suggests that, at this time, service similar to that of the Synagogue may have been held in some building attached to the Temple, and that thus the contrast between those who listened to the reading of Scripture and that of the unthinking worshipper who followed the ceremonial practices may be the more emphasized. In any case, the contrast suggested is that of the famous passage in 1 Sam. xv. 22—the great distinction between outward observance and inward obedience to which our Lord set His seal in Matt. xii. 7.

sacrifice of fools. This may be not only a sacrifice that has no thought of its significance, but actually the sacrifice of wicked men (cf. Prov. xv. 8), though the latter does not seem so probable.

they know not. These words are capable of several inter-

rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to
utter [a] any thing before God; for God is in heaven, and
thou upon earth: therefore let thy words be few. For a 3
dream cometh with a multitude of [b] business; and a fool's
voice with a multitude of words. When thou vowest 4
a vow unto God, defer not to pay it; for he hath no
pleasure in fools: pay that which thou vowest. Better 5
is it that thou shouldest not vow, than that thou shouldest

[a] Or, *a word* [b] Or, *travail*

---

pretations. First, that of the text, which is followed by many interpreters, but is not easily sustained by the Hebrew. Secondly, 'they know not so that in consequence they do evil.' Thirdly, 'they (i.e. "the righteous") know not to do evil.' This seems impossible, as the reference to the righteous would be very obscure, and almost unintelligible without some further indication. A slight alteration of the original would enable us to render, 'for they know not how to do anything else than evil,' which would give a good sense. The choice seems to lie between this and the second rendering given above.

2. let thy words be few. The whole precept is against carelessness and mere repetition in prayer, and inculcates a reverential spirit that finds its utterance in proper language. A precept from the Talmud forms a close parallel, 'The words of a man should always be few in the presence of God' (cf. Matt. vi. 7).

3. For a dream cometh. The illustration contained in this verse is based upon a true observation, namely, that a harassed mind filled with many anxieties and crowded with thoughts of business gives no opportunity for quiet slumber, and so occasions dreams; just in the same way the restless spirit of the foolish man is manifested in his merely verbal prayers, which are impotent and fruitless as a passing vision.

4. he hath no pleasure. This should, perhaps, be more generally expressed 'There is no pleasure,' i.e. neither God nor men find any satisfaction in a fool. The reason adduced for not paying a vow is different from that found in Deut. xxiii. 21, where we read, 'The Lord thy God will surely require it of thee.' Here the writer does not look to the final result of the recklessness, but to the moral weakness inherent in such conduct. A somewhat close parallel is that of Prov. xx. 25.

5. For this verse cf. Deut. xxiii. 22; in fact, the whole section seems to have that passage in Deuteronomy in view, for the next verse has a distinct reference to Deut. xviii. 23.

6 vow and not pay. Suffer not thy mouth to cause thy
flesh to sin; neither say thou before the [a] angel, that it
was an error: wherefore should God be angry at thy
7 voice, and destroy the work of thine hands? [b] For *thus it*
cometh to pass through the multitude of dreams and vanities and many words: but fear thou God.

8 If thou seest the oppression of the poor, and the violent

---

[a] Or, *messenger* of God See Mal. ii. 7.

[b] Or, *For in the multitude of dreams and vanities are also many words* or, *there are vanities, and in many words*

---

6. thy flesh to sin. Flesh seems here to be an equivalent to the whole nature, which is thus led into evil ways by the rashness of a careless vow. The phrase may signify 'to be brought under punishment,' in which case the thought is that of the painful results that will ensue.

before the angel. If 'angel' is the correct rendering, the reference must be to the recording angel. The LXX reads 'before God,' but the word is not Elohim, as in Ps. viii. 5, but another word, whose ordinary meaning is 'messenger,' though it is frequently employed of the angel of God, especially in the E narratives of the Pentateuch. In Malachi ii. 7 we find it employed of the priest, and that is probably its significance here. The words would then refer to the custom described in Num. xv. 25, where the ritual of the offering for sins of ignorance is described.

that it was. 'That' should probably be omitted, as the word so translated was a mere sign of quotation. We should, therefore, render 'it was an error' as the actual words spoken to the priest. The closing words of the verse point to the folly of running recklessly into the risk of meeting the Divine displeasure.

For thus it cometh to pass, &c. It will be seen that these opening words have no equivalent in the original, but are introduced by the revisers with the purpose of making sense of a very difficult verse, the idea being that the writer here sums up the thought of the foregoing paragraph; but, as will be seen from the R. V. margin, other renderings are suggested, neither of which appears to give much better sense. We are almost driven to the conclusion that there must be some original corruption of the text, and probably a solution along the lines of that suggested by Siegfried is the most satisfactory, namely, that the words refer back to verse 3, and that originally they must have run somewhat as follows: 'As dreams come from a multitude of business, so come vanities from taking away of judgement and justice in [a]a province, marvel not at the matter: for one higher than the high regardeth; and there be higher than they. [b]Moreover 9 the profit of the earth is for all: the king *himself* is served by the field.

---

[a] Or, *the state*

[b] Or, *But the profit of a land every way is a king that maketh himself servant to the field* or, *is a king over the cultivated field*

---

a multitude of words.' The verse closes with a repetition of the warning to fear God.

8–20. The section covered by these verses consists of rather loosely connected reflections upon civil government and the use of wealth. Throughout we find fresh illustrations of the central theme that even wealth and power lead to vanity, and are without lasting satisfaction.

8. This verse reveals the typical condition of many Oriental states, wherein a corrupt government leads to oppression and injustice. The bribery and tyranny of high officials causes the grinding of the faces of the poor, as in many parts of Turkey at the present time. The latter part of the verse is very obscure. What the reference of the words 'for one higher than the high regardeth; and there be higher than they' is we cannot easily discover. Some think the reference to be to God, who overrules all apparent injustice, in the end for good. But in addition to the fact that on the second occasion the word rendered 'higher' is a plural form, which is not in itself impossible in reference to the Divine Being, there is the consideration that so to understand it does not give a good sense, and it is more probable that it is a somewhat disguised reference to the multitude of high officials whose mutual jealousies and counterplots baulk one another at every point. The writer's conclusion is, therefore, that in such a rotten system of government there need be no surprise at evil results.

9. Moreover the profit of the earth. This verse is one of the most difficult in the book to interpret, and probably there is some original corruption of the text which makes it impossible for us now to extract a satisfactory meaning from the words as they stand, neither does any suggested restoration commend itself. The meaning of the translation in the R. V. text is obviously that both people and king are in the end dependent upon the soil—a sort of ancient claim that 'back to the land' is the only solution of the social problem; and very probably, however we translate the words, the meaning is, as Delitzsch maintains, to suggest that a king who takes interest in the development of agriculture serves

10 He that loveth silver shall not be satisfied with silver; nor he that loveth abundance with increase: this also is
11 vanity. When goods increase, they are increased that eat them: and what advantage is there to the owner
12 thereof, saving the beholding *of them* with his eyes? The sleep of a labouring man is sweet, whether he eat little or much: but the fulness of the rich will not suffer him to sleep.

13 There is a grievous evil which I have seen under the sun,
14 *namely*, riches kept by the owner thereof to his hurt: and those riches perish by evil [a] adventure; and if he hath
15 begotten a son, there is nothing in his hand. As he

---

[a] Or, *travail*

---

the highest interests of his country. Wildeboer makes the interesting suggestion that the words might be rendered, 'In all circumstances it is a gain for a land when it has a king to whom obedience is willingly rendered'; and this is, perhaps, the best that can be made of very difficult Hebrew.

10. he that loveth abundance with increase. It would be better to translate, 'He that loveth riches will never be satisfied with his income.'

When goods increase, &c. This is a reflection from experience: As the rich man's household increases, he has the more to care for, and is compelled to spend more freely: but even if his possessions increase, and he is able to make a more brilliant show in the world, all the advantage that accrues is the delight to the eyes that such glories bring, but no real gain to the possessor.

12. Increase of riches brings with it such anxiety that often the wealthy man is a stranger to the unbroken slumber of the labourer.

'They know who work, not they who play,
If rest is sweet.'

13-17. These verses contain a clearly written and powerful picture of the man who has heaped up wealth, and by some evil chance of fortune has been deprived of it all, so that the son for whom he has hoarded it is left penniless, and the man himself returns to the grave in poverty, his life embittered by his sorrow and disappointment. Cf. for an illustration of the verses Job i. 21, xxi. 25; Ecclus. xl. 1; 1 Tim. vi. 6.

came forth of his mother's womb, naked shall he go
again as he came, and shall take nothing for his labour,
which he may carry away in his hand. And this also is 16
a grievous evil, that in all points as he came, so shall he
go: and what profit hath he that he laboureth for the
wind? [a] All his days also he eateth in darkness, and he 17
is sore vexed and hath sickness and wrath.

Behold, [b] that which I have seen to be good and to be 18
comely is for one to eat and to drink, and to enjoy good
in all his labour, wherein he laboureth under the sun,
[c] all the days of his life which God hath given him: for
this is his portion. Every man also to whom God hath 19
given riches and wealth, and hath given him power to
eat thereof, and to take his portion, and to rejoice in his
labour; this is the gift of God. For he shall not much 20
remember the days of his life; because God answereth
him in the joy of his heart.

There is an evil which I have seen under the sun, and it 6
is heavy upon men: a man to whom God giveth riches, 2

[a] The Sept. has, *All his days are in darkness and mourning, and much vexation and sickness and wrath.*

[b] Or, *that which I have seen: it is good and comely for one &c.*

[c] Heb. *the number of the days.*

18, 19. These verses, in a rather more expanded form, repeat the thought of ii. 24.

20. he shall not much remember. Joy and gladness shall so fill the man's life that he will not be morbid either about its length or shortness (cf. Prov. xv. 13, 15). As to the last words of the verse, the meaning is clear, though the translation varies. Probably the best rendering is, 'God occupies him with the joy of his heart,' that is, makes joy his constant companion (cf. Plumptre for the various renderings that have been suggested).

vi. This short chapter is concerned with the disappointment of life that comes through experience of cherished desires finding no fulfilment. The writer returns to the mood and to the illustrations that we have found in ii. 18-23, iv. 7, 8, v. 13-17.

wealth, and honour, so that he lacketh nothing for his
soul of all that he desireth, yet God giveth him not power
to eat thereof, but a stranger eateth it; this is vanity,
3 and it is an evil disease. If a man beget an hundred
children, and live many years, so that the days of his
years be many, but his soul be not filled with good, and
moreover he have no burial; I say, that an untimely
4 birth is better than he: for it cometh in vanity, and
departeth in darkness, and the name thereof is covered
5 with darkness; moreover it hath not seen the sun [a] nor
6 known it; [b] this hath rest rather than the other: yea,
though he live a thousand years twice told, and yet enjoy
7 no good: do not all go to one place? All the labour of
man is for his mouth, and yet the appetite is not filled.
8 For what advantage hath the wise more than the fool?

[a] Or, *neither had any knowledge*

[b] Or, *it is better with this than with the other*

---

3. no burial. The writer is choosing different types from which to illustrate the unsatisfactoriness of life. In verses 1 and 2 he selects the childless man. In this verse he selects a man with a large number of descendants, who yet comes to a dishonoured grave. Some writers see a double reference to Greek history in this verse—first, to Artaxerxes Mnemon (404 B.C.), who is said to have had over 100 children, and who died of grief at the age of nearly 100, because of the evil conduct of his sons; and secondly, to his son Artaxerxes Ochus, who was slain by one of his court favourites, and whose body was devoured by cats. The shame of having no honourable burial was reckoned a terrible disgrace in the ancient world (see the story of Jezebel, 2 Kings ix. 35, and of Jehoiachim, Jer. xxii. 19). On the other hand, the determination to give a beloved brother fitting burial at all hazards is the subject of Sophocles' magnificent play the *Antigone*.

5. nor known it. This may also mean 'nor awakened to self-consciousness,' and the following words are better rendered as in the margin: 'It is better with this than with the other.' The whole thought is the outcome of a very pessimistic mood that gives way to exaggerated language about even the saddest of earthly lots.

8. For what advantage. This cynical question has been met

[a] *or* what hath the poor man, that knoweth to walk before the living? Better is the sight of the eyes than the 9
wandering of the desire: this also is vanity and a striving after wind.

[b] Whatsoever hath been, the name thereof was given 10
long ago, and it is known that it is [c] man: neither can
he contend with him that is mightier than he. Seeing 11
there be many [d] things that increase vanity, what is man

---

[a] Or, or *the poor man that hath understanding, in walking before the living*

[b] Or, *Whatsoever he be, his name was given him long ago, and it is known that he is man*

[c] Heb. *Adam* See Gen. ii. 7. [d] Or, *words*

---

before (ii. 15), but the second clause of it is new, and not easy to interpret. It probably means, 'What is the advantage of the poor man who knows how to control his appetite over the rich man who does not possess that knowledge?'

9. the sight of the eyes. This obviously means the attainment of desire (cf. Prov. xiii. 12).

10. Whatsoever hath been. Better, perhaps, as in the margin, 'whatever he is.' Two interpretations of the verse are given. One sees in it a statement of absolute fatalism, namely, that man's nature is fixed from all eternity: but two objections are raised to that interpretation—first, that the word rendered 'already' is never used anywhere else in this book of the Divine purposes, neither is the word 'mightier' used elsewhere of God. It is more probable, therefore, that the words are a play upon the name Adam, and refer to man's essential mortality and his inability to escape Death, who is mightier than he.

11. many things. The word here rendered 'things,' as is frequently the case, may also mean 'words,' and if so understood here the reference will be to the purposeless discussions of the philosophers. Cf. Omar:—

'Myself when young did eagerly frequent
Doctor and saint, and heard great argument
  About it and about: but evermore
Came out by the same door wherein I went.'

Cf. further the immediately following stanzas. This interpretation fits in best with that which saw in the former verse a reference to fatalism; but if we render 'things' it better suits the second interpretation, and refers to the multitude of life's affairs.

12 the better? For who knoweth what is good for man in *his* life, [a] all the days of his vain life which he spendeth as a shadow? for who can tell a man what shall be after him under the sun?

7 A *good* name is better than precious ointment; and the
2 day of death than the day of one's birth. It is better to

---

[a] Heb. *the number of the days.*

12. his vain life . . . as a shadow. Compare for the metaphor viii. 13; Job xiv. 2; Jas. iv. 14, also Omar:

'We are no other than a moving row
Of Magic Shadow-shapes, that come and go
Round with the Sun-illumined Lantern held
In Midnight by the Master of the Show.'

And also the famous French verses:

'La vie est vaine:
Un peu d'amour,
Un peu de haine,
Et puis—bonjour!

'La vie est brève:
Un peu d'espoir,
Un peu de rêve,
Et puis—bonsoir!'

vii. 1–12. This section consists in the main of a series of proverbial utterances, more or less closely connected, on the subject of the greater wisdom that inheres in a serious view of life, though the illustrations that are taken strike one as rather gloomy in character, and as taking a narrow view of mirth and wisdom.

1. A good name, &c. In the original these words constitute a *paranomasia*, which is difficult to produce in English, the play being on the words for 'name' and 'ointment,' which resemble one another very closely. It might roughly be represented in English by the rendering, 'Fair fame is better than fine perfume' (cf. Song of Songs i. 3).

the day of death. The thought of these words is that the end of life is secure, while its beginning is full of uncertainty, and many excellent literary illustrations will be found in Plumptre's note on the passage. We are reminded of the cynical remark of the grave-digger in *Beside the Bonnie Briarbush*: 'Ye can hae

go to the house of mourning, than to go to the house of
feasting: for that is the end of all men; and the living
will lay it to his heart. Sorrow is better than laughter: 3
for by the sadness of the countenance the heart is made
[a]glad. The heart of the wise is in the house of mourn- 4
ing; but the heart of fools is in the house of mirth. It 5
is better to hear the rebuke of the wise, than for a man
to hear the song of fools. For as the crackling of thorns 6
under a pot, so is the laughter of the fool: this also is
vanity. [b]Surely extortion maketh a wise man foolish; 7
and a gift destroyeth the understanding. Better is the 8
end of a thing than the beginning thereof: *and* the
patient in spirit is better than the proud in spirit. Be 9
not hasty in thy spirit to be [c]angry: for [d]anger resteth
in the bosom of fools. Say not thou, What is the cause 10
that the former days were better than these? for thou

[a] Or, *better* [b] Or, *For* [c] Or, *vexed* [d] Or, *vexation*

---

little rael pleesure in a merrige, for ye never ken hoo it will end; but there's nae risk about a beerial.'

2. the house of mourning. We must remember that, according to Jewish custom, mourning lasted for at least a week, and that the reference here is probably to consolatory visits during that period, which are regarded as emphasizing, for the one who takes part in them, the truth of life's uncertainty.

3. glad should rather be 'better,' that is, sorrow is a better discipline for the soul than joy. It cuts deeper into life.

6. Here, again, there is a *paranomasia*, which can be represented in English as 'the crackling of nettles under a kettle.'

7. Surely. This word should properly be rendered by the conjunction 'for,' but in that case it is not easy to trace the argument, so that some think that the first half of the verse has been lost, and Delitzsch supplies it from Prov. xvi. 8, 'Better is a little with righteousness than great revenues with injustice.'

9. for, &c. By a 'gift' in the latter part of the verse we have possibly to understand a 'bribe,' since bribery was one of the great evils of Oriental states. (See Prov. xv. 27, xvii. 8.)

10. See the excellent literary illustrations given in Moffatt's volume.

11 dost not inquire [a] wisely concerning this. Wisdom [b] is
as good as an inheritance: yea, more excellent is it for
12 them that see the sun. For wisdom is a defence, even
as money is a defence: but the excellency of knowledge is, that wisdom preserveth the life of him that
13 hath it. Consider the work of God: for who can make

---

[a] Heb. *out of wisdom.*

[b] Or, *is good together with an inheritance: and profitable unto them &c.*

---

11. Wisdom is as good as. The rendering of the margin, 'good together with,' is probably more correct, and suits better the thought that has occurred more than once in the book, namely, that riches in themselves may do more harm than good, but when coupled with wisdom they make the latter more powerful. In the latter part of the verse the margin should also be followed, 'and profitable unto them.'

12. defence. This is really 'shade,' and we are to think of the favourite Oriental figure of the shadow cast by a rock in the blazing heat, as in the famous passage in Isaiah xxxii. 2. The writer couples both wisdom and money here, recognizing that each is capable of protecting to some extent those who possess them; but the latter part of the verse shows that he considers that it will be the part of the truly sensible man to prefer wisdom to wealth, since there is in the former a power that saves life as well as affords it grateful shade by the way. By the alteration of a single letter Siegfried translates the first part of the verse 'the shelter of wisdom is like the shelter of money.'

13–18. It is not easy to see any close connexion between these verses and those that precede them. It seems better, therefore, to connect them closely with the verses that follow, and let the next paragraph run from verse 13 to 18, which would then deal with some special aspects of the problem of the Divine government, as presented in the seeming inequalities of human life, and would inculcate a mood of moderation and contentment with practical Godliness. If we do not take this course, the only other open to us is to decide, with Siegfried, that more than one hand is at work on the passage, and that there is no obvious connexion between these verses and what either precedes or follows them.

13. Consider. This word may be regarded as summing up much of the practical philosophy of the book. The writer advises us not to perplex ourselves too much about the mysteries of the universe, but by observing and reflecting upon God's methods,

that straight, which he hath made crooked? In the day 14
of prosperity be joyful, and in the day of adversity
consider: God hath even made the one side by side with
the other, to the end that man should not find out any
thing *that shall be* after him.

All this have I seen in the days of my vanity: there is a 15
righteous man that perisheth in his righteousness, and
there is a wicked man that prolongeth *his life* in his evil-
doing. Be not righteous over much; neither make 16

---

seek to discover how we may rule our lives in accordance with the Divine will.

14. The thought of this verse is not quite easy to discover, but probably its general significance is that, whether in joy or in sorrow, we are not to allow the hope or fear of what we follow to deprive us of the value of the passing experience. We are not to refuse to be glad in prosperity, nor when sorrow comes to be so overwhelmed by it that we cannot discover its meaning. God has filled life with both these experiences, but has not given man the power of prevision to tell beforehand which lot will be his; and this very uncertainty of life constitutes for the wise man its true discipline (cf. chaps. iii. 18, vi. 12, and Job ii. 10). Cf. the beautiful sentence in one of R. L. Stevenson's Prayers:—'When the day returns, return to us, our sun and comforter, and call us up with morning faces and with morning hearts—eager to labour—eager to be happy, if happiness shall be our portion—and if the day be marked for sorrow, strong to endure it.' Some have seen in the latter part of the verse a reference to the doctrine of the Resurrection, and have considered that the writer is here opposing the definite teaching upon it, which was just becoming prominent among a certain section of his countrymen at that period; but it is very doubtful whether the words can bear that significance.

15. All this have I seen. The writer reverts back to that constantly recurring problem, not only of the O. T. thinkers, but, which has perplexed every age, the prosperity of the wicked and the evil lot of the righteous (cf. ii. 14-16, iii. 19, viii. 11-14, as well as the whole Book of Job).

16. Be not righteous over much. This and the following verse cause much difficulty to commentators owing to their seemingly mocking tone. Many suppose them to be derived from the Greek idea of the Golden Mean, which inculcated the principle that one should never be too enthusiastic about any

thyself over wise: why shouldest thou destroy thyself?
17 Be not over much wicked, neither be thou foolish: why
18 shouldest thou die before thy time? It is good that thou
shouldest take hold of this; yea, also from that withdraw
not thine hand: for he that feareth God shall come forth
of them all.

19 Wisdom is a strength to the wise man more than ten

---

cause, and that the safest going lay in the middle path. But even then it is not easy to understand the form of the teaching here, as it is difficult to suppose that if righteous and wicked are to be taken literally the writer could really suggest that it was well to check one's self in the way of goodness, or that one could safely go a certain length in the way of sin. It seems necessary, therefore, to find some other meaning than the literal one for the words here employed, and the best explanation is probably that which regards the counsel as aimed against the extreme legalism of the sect that was later known as that of the Pharisees. If the writer, as is frequently supposed, had more sympathy with those who were subsequently known as Sadducees, there may be more point in the suggestion. He sees a danger in extreme asceticism, but a still greater one in extreme licence. If we may further think that there was any political reference in the writer's mind, we may compare what is said about the Chasidim (that is, the extreme pietists) in 2 Macc. xiv. 6, that they 'keep up war, and are seditious, not suffering the kingdom to find tranquillity.' Haupt regards the words as equivalent to orthodox and unorthodox, but this introduces too modern ideas. The result of either course is shown to be self-destruction—in the former case probably by excess of zeal, and in the latter by bringing one's self under Divine punishment.

18. It is good, &c. The difficulty that attaches to the former verses is, of course, found here also, because until we know to what they refer it is not possible to give a satisfactory meaning to this verse. In general terms it seems to be a statement that the wider our human experience, the better it is for us, so long as all our life is subject to the Divine will. A man should acquaint himself with all the forms of life, but govern his own conduct by the Divine counsel.

19–29. In this section we have some general reflections upon wisdom that are not very closely connected, and included in them is an extremely bitter and cynical judgement on women, while the passage closes with a statement as to man's restlessness and subtlety.

19. ten rulers. The number ten is obviously merely figura-

rulers which are in a city. [a] Surely there is not a 20
righteous man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth
not. Also [b] take not heed unto all words that are spoken; 21
lest thou hear thy servant curse thee: for oftentimes also 22
thine own heart knoweth that thou thyself likewise hast
cursed others.

All this have I [c] proved in wisdom: I said, I will be 23
wise; but it was far from me. That which [d] is is far off, 24

---

[a] Or, *For* [b] Heb. *give not thine heart.* [c] Or, *tried by* [d] Or, *hath been*

---

tive, and suggests perfection; that is to say, that wisdom plays the same part in a man's life as does the best city council in civic affairs. By a slight alteration of the Hebrew the words have been also rendered (as a further reference to the teaching of verse 12), 'Wisdom is a greater protection for the wise man than the riches of the rulers who were in the city.'

20. Surely. The Hebrew particle thus rendered is generally translated 'for,' but if we so translate it here, then we are bound to find a close connexion between this and the preceding verse. This is difficult to do, and some are even driven to the story of Abraham's intercession for Sodom in order to account for it, but it is not easy to see how that narrative helps us. It is better, therefore, to translate, as may be done, 'because,' and thus connect closely the verses which follow. This makes better sense.

21. lest thou hear. The force of the words is the counsel contained in the common saying 'Listeners hear no good of themselves,' and is directed against the folly of paying attention to all manner of gossip and rumour.

22. thine own heart knoweth. Hereby the writer enforces his counsel with a *tu quoque,* as he reminds the reader that his own heart is probably not guiltless of having harboured ungenerous thoughts of his neighbour, and his tongue of having given expression to them.

23. have I proved. Here, again, the writer returns to an account of his practical experience of life and the endeavours he made to solve its riddles, as he has already described in chaps. i and ii; and he has to make the confession that, though wisdom had been his ideal, he has been unable to reach it.

24. That which is. True reality has proved elusive, and he has no plummet whereby to sound its depths.

25 and exceeding deep; who can find it out? I turned about, and my heart *was set* to know and to search out, and to seek wisdom and the reason *of things*, and to know [a] that wickedness is folly, and that foolishness is
26 madness: and I find a thing more bitter than death, *even* the woman [b] whose heart is snares and nets, *and* her hands *as* bands: whoso pleaseth God shall escape from
27 her; but the sinner shall be taken by her. Behold, this have I found, saith the Preacher, [c] *laying* one thing to

[a] Or, *the wickedness of folly, and foolishness* which is *madness*
[b] Or, *who is a snare, and her heart is* as *nets*
[c] Or, weighing *one thing after another, to find out the reason*

---

25. As in i. 17, he here describes how he has penetrated even to the deeps of wickedness and folly, but found there also mocking uncertainty, and no final solution; but, he declares,

26. he has made one cruel discovery, namely, that the deepest depth of sin and folly is to be found is the woman who has set herself to act the temptress, and that no more terrible lot can be imagined than to fall into her hands. This teaching has many parallels in Proverbs, as the study of that book will show. It is much discussed whether the author is here speaking of some personal experience or not, but it is impossible to decide the point. Rather against the idea of this being a personal experience is the presence of the words, 'Whoso pleaseth God shall escape from her.'

27, 28. The exact connexion and purport of these verses is not easy to discover. To begin with, the word rendered 'account' only occurs in this book, where it is used in three passages, in each of which, unfortunately, the English rendering is different. In vii. 25 it is rendered 'reason,' and in ix. 10, 'device.' Wildeboer considers it equivalent to 'wisdom' here, and if we could so render, it would make the passage much clearer. A further interest is that a slight variant of the same word is translated in verse 29 'inventions,' and there can be no doubt that in the original a play upon the words is intended. Perhaps we may suppose that the real meaning is something like this—that the preacher declares he has carefully compared one thing with another in order to arrive at the real discovery of truth, which he has failed to find, but has discovered this—that men have misled themselves by false discoveries of their own with which they have rested satisfied. A further difficulty of the passage is in the extremely bitter judgement expressed on womankind. The statement

another, to find out the account: which my soul still 28
seeketh, but I have not found: one man among a
thousand have I found; but a woman among all those
have I not found. Behold, this only have I found, that 29
God made man upright; but they have sought out many
inventions.

Who is as the wise man? and who knoweth the 8
interpretation of a thing? A man's wisdom maketh his
face to shine, and the [a] hardness of his face is changed.

[a] Heb. *strength*.

---

in verse 26 was intelligible enough, for there a woman of evil life was clearly indicated; but here to say that, while it is hard enough even among a thousand men to find one lover of wisdom, it is impossible to find any at all among women, is the excess of sceptical bitterness. Many passages can be quoted both from Greek and Hebrew writers which show the poor opinion held of women by many among them, particularly in Euripides and in the Greek epigrams.[1] Perhaps the explanation is to be found in the evil influence exerted in the Persian and Greek courts by the designing women of the palace; and we are to take the words as an exaggerated expression of the writer's experience of life as he has seen women, by their jealousy and plotting, ruin so many wise counsels. Some have supposed that there is here a special reference to Agathoclea, the mistress of one of the Ptolemies, who was a byword for iniquity.

29. God made man upright. The writer goes back in thought to Gen. i. 31, and attributes all subsequent evil to man's own will and work. The 'inventions' may not necessarily be evil, but there is a danger that man's power of discovery and skill in producing them should tempt his pride, and thus lead him astray. See the passages in Greek and Latin literature cited in illustration by Plumptre.

viii. 1-9. This section treats of the praise of wisdom and its practical effects, but also of its serious limitations.

1. hardness. This word, literally 'strength,' probably denotes 'coarseness' or 'rusticity.' The thought is that wisdom and its

---

[1] See e.g. the very bitter lines in the *Medea*, 573-5:

'Would that mortals otherwise
Could get them babes, that womankind were not,
And so no curse had lighted upon men.'

2 I *counsel thee*, Keep the king's command, and that in
3 regard of the oath of God. Be not hasty to go out of his

---

pursuit refine the face as well as illumine the heart[1]. The LXX here is followed by some interpreters in its translation, 'his shameless face shall be hated,' but that does not seem at all to express the thought of the passage; cf. Ecclus. xiii. 25, 'The heart of a man changeth his countenance whether it be for good or for evil.'

Genung has the following fine illustration from Stevenson's *Inland Voyage*, where that writer says: 'To be even one of the outskirters of art leaves a fine stamp on a man's countenance. I remember once dining with a party in the inn at *Chateau Landon.* Most of them were unmistakeable bagmen; others well-to-do peasantry; but there was one young fellow in a blouse whose face stood out from among the rest surprisingly. It looked more finished; more of the spirit looked out through it; it had a living, expressive air, and you could see that his eyes took things in. My companion and I wondered greatly who and what he could be. It was fair time in *Chateau Landon*, and when we went along to the booths we had our question answered; for there was our friend busily fiddling for the peasants to caper to. He was a wandering violinist.'

2. I counsel thee. These words, as will be seen, have no equivalent in the original, and might well be omitted.

that in regard of. It is generally supposed that these words direct men to obey the king, inasmuch as such obedience is in accordance with the Divine will, who has appointed kings in human society; and many commentators illustrate here by a story told in Josephus of Ptolemy Soter, who settled a number of Jewish captives at Alexandria, and bound them by a solid oath of fealty to his house, knowing that the Jews had such reverence for oaths. Siegfried suggests that the first words of the following verse should be read in this one, so that the meaning of the passage would be, 'Keep the king's command, but when an oath of God is concerned be not in too great a hurry'—that is, it behoves a man to consider carefully whether at any time the lines of the Divine and human obedience cross one another.

3. Be not hasty. It is very difficult to give any satisfactory meaning to these words as they are ordinarily read. They may mean, 'Don't be too ready to depart from your duty as the king's servant even in difficult circumstances'; they have also been rendered, 'Do not tremble in the king's presence.' If, however, we

---

[1] Cf. Henry James in *Roderick Hudson*: 'Prayer makes fine lines'—referring to the spiritual beauty of a saintly face.

presence; persist not in an evil thing: for he doeth
whatsoever pleaseth him. Because the king's word *hath* 4
power; and who may say unto him, What doest thou?
Whoso keepeth the commandment shall know no evil 5
thing; and a wise man's heart discerneth time and
judgement: for to every [a] purpose there is a time and 6
judgement; because the [b] misery of man is great upon
him: for he knoweth not that which shall be; [c] for who 7
can tell him how it shall be? There is no man that hath 8
power over the [d] spirit to retain the [d] spirit; neither hath

---

[a] Or, *matter* [b] Or, *evil*
[c] Or, *for* even *when it cometh to pass, who shall declare it unto him?* [d] Or, *wind*

---

follow Siegfried and attach the first words to the former verse we shall then read, 'Depart from him, persist not in evil,' and we shall understand the counsel as being a direction to leave the king when his commands are clearly evil. This latter interpretation seems on the whole the best.

5. Whoso keepeth the commandment. It is doubtful whether the commandment here referred to is that of God or of the earthly monarch, but the latter seems more likely; in which case the counsel is one of prudence, advising men to live in obedience to the king's statutes, and declaring that the wise man will be able to understand the signs of the time, and to walk warily and safely.

time and judgement. It gives a better sense if we translate this with the LXX as 'the season of judgement,' and so also in the next verse.

6. misery. This is rather 'evil,' and the whole reference of the passage seems to be to the oppression and violence of the tyrant, and the weariness of the wise man at his inability to foretell the end of it all.

8. This verse has offered much difficulty to interpreters, but on the whole it seems fairly clear if we once understand its construction. It consists of two parallel ideas, each made up of two members, and may be paraphrased as follows: 'Just as no man can hold the wind in his fist, neither can he delay or anticipate the day of his death; and in the second place, as there is no escaping active service for the soldier engaged in a campaign, so neither will evil give a man any liberty if he has once yielded himself to its power.'

he power over the day of death; and there is no discharge [a] in *that* war: neither shall wickedness deliver him that
9 is given to it. All this have I seen, and applied my heart unto every work that is done under the sun: [b] *there is* a time wherein one man hath power over another [c] to his hurt.

10 And withal I saw the wicked buried, [d] and they came *to the grave*; and they that had done right went away from the holy place, and were forgotten in the city: this
11 also is vanity. Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of
12 men is [e] fully set in them to do evil. Though a sinner do evil an hundred times, and prolong his *days*, yet

---

[a] Or, *in battle* [b] Or, *what time one man had &c.*

[c] Or, *to his own hurt*

[d] Or, *who had come and gone away from the holy place, and they were forgotten in the city where they had so done* Or, *and men came and went &c.*

[e] Or, *emboldened*

---

discharge in war. This is generally taken to refer to the Persian customs which permitted no escape to soldiers on service, and is contrasted with the more humane Jewish law contained in Deut. xx. 5-8. Forced service in its most rigid form is always one of the heaviest burdens of a tyrannical government.

9. there is a time. This should probably be 'at a time when,' that is, the writer states that all the observations of the previous passage have been made in, and apply to, a time of tyranny.

viii. 10-15. In this section the writer reverts to a familiar subject, the problem of the seeming injustice of the respective lots of the wicked and the righteous, and he concludes with a practical counsel to enjoy life as we find it.

10. Upon the meaning of this verse there has been very much discussion, but many of the difficulties of interpretation rather concern the Hebrew, and need not be here discussed. There is a very full note upon it in Plumptre's commentary. On the whole the R. V. represents the meaning very well. We may paraphrase as follows, 'Withal I saw the wicked receive honourable burial at the hands of their friends, while the righteous were excluded from the holy city, and their memory forgotten within it.'

12, 13. These verses are in the form of a double paradox,

surely I know that it shall be well with them that fear
God, which fear before him: but it shall not be well 13
with the wicked, neither shall he prolong *his* days, *which
are* as a shadow; because he feareth not before God.
There is a vanity which is done upon the earth; that 14
there be righteous men, unto whom it happeneth according
to the work of the wicked; again, there be wicked
men, to whom it happeneth according to the work of the
righteous: I said that this also is vanity. Then I 15
commended mirth, because a man hath no better thing
under the sun, than to eat, and to drink, and to be
merry: [a] for that shall abide with him in his labour *all* the
days of his life which God hath given him under the sun.

When I applied mine heart to know wisdom, and to 16
see the [b] business that is done upon the earth: ([c] for also
there is that neither day nor night seeth sleep with his

[a] Or, *and that this should accompany him* [b] Or, *travail*

[c] Or, *how that neither by day nor by night do men see sleep with their eyes*

'Though the life of the sinful man be a long one, still it is in reality fleeting as a shadow, whereas the righteous, even with a short earthly life, has in it the promise of eternity.' It is one of the strongest passages, therefore, in the book in favour of the doctrine of a resurrection; and naturally Siegfried assigns it to the hand of one of his more orthodox revisers. For the thought of the passage compare Isa. lxv. 20, Ps. xxxix. 6, and Wisdom iv. 8. Cf. Tennyson: 'Then, if Thou willest, let my day be brief, So Thou wilt strike Thy glory through the day.'

15. For the thought of this verse cf. ii. 24, iii. 12, 22.

for that shall abide. This should rather be 'that this should accompany,' or 'let this accompany.'

viii. 16—ix. 6. In this section the same thought is pursued as in the previous one, but under the somewhat different aspect that, death being the common lot of all, their various enterprises are baffled by it, and their successes or failures apparently equalized. Life appears here in the guise of an endless mocker who baffles all men's attempts to solve his riddles.

16, 17. These verses contain one sentence, with a clause in

17 eyes:) then I beheld all the work of God, that man cannot find out the work that is done under the sun: because however much a man labour to seek it out, yet he shall not find it; yea moreover, though a wise man
9 think to know it, yet shall he not be able to find it. For all this I laid to my heart, even to explore all this; that the righteous, and the wise, and their works, are in the hand of God: whether it be love or hatred, man knoweth
2 it not; all is before them. All things come alike to all: there is one event to the righteous and to the wicked; to the good [a] and to the clean and to the unclean; to him that sacrificeth and to him that sacrificeth not: as is the good, so is the sinner; *and* he that sweareth, as

---

[a] Some ancient versions read, *and to the evil; to the clean &c.*

---

parenthesis that describes the ceaseless effort of the searcher who gives himself no rest either night or day. The meaning of the verses is sufficiently clear, and they constitute a definite statement that by searching man cannot discover the mysteries of the Divine working. Plumptre reminds us that the words form the text of Bishop Butler's famous sermon on 'The Ignorance of Man.'

ix. **1. all is before them.** These words as they stand seem to constitute the statement that what lies ahead in life is unknown to each man; whether his future he made up of love or hate, he cannot tell. The LXX, however, and Siegfried follows it, includes the first word of the next verse in this phrase, and, by the tiny alteration of one letter, reads it 'vanity'; thus the words run 'All that lies before them is vanity.' It is a possible but not very probable rendering.

2. For the practical scepticism of this verse cf. Job ix. 22, though the latter passage is even more severe than this.

to the good. This is the only one of the comparisons that has no second member, and it is probable that we should read with several versions 'and to the evil' after it. In the references that follow to ceremonial cleanness and to sacrifice, we see that the writer has the Levitical law in mind.

he that sweareth. As has been pointed out, each of the comparisons in the verse has the good one first, so here it would seem that the person who takes an oath, and loyally observes it, is set over against a man who, in a spirit of caution or cowardice, is

he that feareth an oath. This is an evil in all that is 3
done under the sun, that there is one event unto all: yea
also, the heart of the sons of men is full of evil, and
madness is in their heart while they live, and after that
they go to the dead. [a] For to him that is joined with all 4
the living there is hope: for a living dog is better than a
dead lion. For the living know that they shall die: but 5
the dead know not any thing, neither have they any more
a reward; for the memory of them is forgotten. As well 6
their love, as their hatred and their envy, is now perished;
neither have they any more a portion for ever in any
thing that is done under the sun.

---

[a] Another reading is, *For who is exempted? With all &c.* or, *who can choose? With all &c.*

---

afraid either to take the oath or to carry out its conditions when he has taken it. The majority of commentators, however, understand the words differently, and hold that 'sweareth' here refers to rash oath-taking.

3. and after that. The English version fails to give us the tragic significance of the original, which breaks off suddenly, and, after a solemn pause, concludes with the words 'to death.'

4. There is no doubt that the R. V. here gives the best meaning to the original. The Hebrew margin suggests another meaning, the equivalent of which is given in the R. V. margin, namely, 'for who is exempted? but there seems no purpose in the question and no advantage in the change.

a living dog. We must remember that in the East a dog is despised, and consequently the comparison here is between the greatest of animals when dead and the least worthy when alive. Cf. the saying of Achilles in the *Odyssey*, 'It is better to be a serf among the living than a king among the dead.'

5. the living know. Here it appears that the writer considers that it is better to look forward even to death than to have no memory at all, and the blackness of the general O. T. view of death is here distinctly felt.

reward ... memory. These words in the original are very much alike, so that, as we have found several times, here also a play upon them is purposed. We might render it thus, 'They have no wage, nor is there a page for them in memory's book.'

7 Go thy way, eat thy bread with joy, and drink thy wine
with a merry heart; for God hath already accepted thy
8 works. Let thy garments be always white; and let not
9 thy head lack ointment. [a] Live joyfully with the wife
whom thou lovest all the days of the life of thy vanity,
which he hath given thee under the sun, all the days of
thy vanity: for that is thy portion in life, and in thy
10 labour wherein thou labourest under the sun. Whatsoever
thy hand [b] findeth to do, do *it* with thy might;

[a] Or, *Enjoy* (Heb. *See*) *life*

[b] Or, *attaineth to do by thy strength*, that *do*

---

ix. 7–12. The same thought still connects these verses with those of the last paragraph, but they begin with a brighter counsel along the lines of viii. 15. The shadow of the grave must not be permitted so to fall upon life as to deprive it of all joy; and yet the writer cannot escape, in verses 11 and 12, from its darkness.

7. God hath already. These words signify that a man may live in accordance with the counsel herein given, confident that God has set his approval upon such a life.

8. The signs here are those of festivity, white garments and perfumed locks being distinctive of festive occasions.

9. Live joyfully. Here the quiet life of the home is praised, and advice given to make the best of it, because life itself is short. The words 'all the days of the life of thy vanity' are omitted in many of the old versions, probably because they seemed to cast a shadow upon the joyful thought of the rest of the verse. Compare the words of Tennyson:

> 'O happy he, and fit to live,
> On whom a happy home has power
> To make him trust his life, and give
> His fealty to the halcyon hour.'

10. Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do. This very familiar form of the text is probably not the correct one. It should rather read, 'Whatsoever lies within thy strength to do, do it'; and we are reminded of the Latin proverb which states that a man's strength is the limit of his obligation ('ultra posse nemo obligatur'), and it is possible that the words here may have been in the mind of Jesus when He said, 'We must work . . . while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work.' (John ix. 4.)

for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in [a] the grave, whither thou goest.

I returned, and saw under the sun, that the race is not 11
to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, neither yet bread to the wise, nor yet riches to men of understanding, nor yet favour to men of skill; but time and chance
happeneth to them all. For man also knoweth not his 12
time: as the fishes that are taken in an evil net, and as the birds that are caught in the snare, even so are the sons of men snared in an evil time, when it falleth suddenly upon them.

I have also seen wisdom under the sun on this wise, 13
and it seemed great unto me: there was a little city, and 14

[a] Heb. *Sheol.*

---

the grave. This is, of course, the Hebrew word 'Sheol,' the ordinary name for the under-world; but it is its only occurrence in this book.

12. in an evil net. Siegfried thinks that the word 'evil' should be omitted, as it has arisen from a misreading of the Hebrew through the word for 'snare' closely resembling the word for 'evil.' The figure is found in several other places (cf. Prov. vii. 23; Ezek. xii. 13, &c.).

ix. 13-16. These verses contain an example of wisdom which is either taken from actual experience or is a parable. Those who regard it as a reflection of a historical situation cite Dor, the siege of which is described in 1 Macc. xv; but the details there given are not sufficient to enable us to identify the events here recorded with that incident. Others suppose it to refer to the siege of Bethsura (1 Macc. vi. 31; 2 Macc. xiii. 19), but again there is no sufficient grounds for the identification. As Haupt remarks, the name of the wise defender of Bethsura has been forgotten, while the name of its traitor is preserved; and he further cites Wellhausen's remark that the Jews would have forgotten Judas Maccabeus if the Books of the Maccabees had not been preserved by the Christian Church. Other parallels, such as that of the siege of Abel in 2 Sam. xx. 15-22, or of the services Themistocles rendered to Athens, seem to be quite beside the point. The whole narrative, however, is sufficiently true to human experience to make it very telling.

few men within it; and there came a great king against it,
15 and besieged it, and built great bulwarks against it: now
there was found in it a poor wise man, and he by his wisdom
delivered the city; yet no man remembered that same
16 poor man. Then said I, Wisdom is better than strength:
nevertheless the poor man's wisdom is despised, and his
words are not heard.

17 The words of the wise [a] *spoken* in quiet are heard more
18 than the cry of him that ruleth among fools. Wisdom is
better than weapons of war: but one sinner destroyeth
10 much good. Dead flies cause the ointment of the

[a] Or, heard *in quiet are better than &c.*

---

16. Cf. vii. 19; also Dunbar's poem, 'None may assure in this world,' ll. 16-20:

'Nane heir bot riche men has renowne,
And pure men are pluckit down,
And none bot just men tholis injure;
Sa wit is blinded and ressoun:
In to this warld may none assure.'

ix. 17—x. 8. The whole of this long section consists of rather loosely connected verses, many of them in the form of proverbs, and all dealing generally with the question of wisdom and its practical applications.

17. spoken in quiet. This should rather be read with the margin, 'heard in quiet are better than.' The meaning is, of course, that more powerful than noisy declamation is the restrained and careful speech of the wise.

him that ruleth among fools. This is equivalent to the Arch-fool.

18. sinner. While the word here employed may mean 'traitor,' it is probable that it has rather the meaning of a man who acts foolishly and thoughtlessly. This is another form of the common experience that thoughtlessness often causes more harm than heartlessness.

x. **1. Dead flies.** This probably should be rather translated 'deadly flies,' that is, those that are either poisonous in themselves or carry contagion from the fact that they are nourished upon, and live in, unclean conditions. When, therefore, they find their

perfumer [a] to send forth a stinking savour: *so* doth a little
folly [b] outweigh wisdom and honour. A wise man's 2
heart is at his right hand; but a fool's heart at his left.
Yea also, when the fool walketh by the way, his 3
[c] understanding faileth him, and he saith [d] to every one
that he is a fool. If the spirit of the ruler rise up against 4
thee, leave not thy place; for [e] yielding allayeth great
offences. There is an evil which I have seen under the 5
sun, as it were an error which proceedeth from the ruler:

[a] Or, *to stink and putrefy*

[b] Or, *him that is valued for wisdom*

[c] Heb. *heart.*

[d] Or, *of*

[e] Or, *gentleness leaveth great sins undone*

---

way into delicate and costly ointment, they bring the germs with them which sour and spoil it.

so doth a little folly. The second half of the verse has been interpreted in various ways. Some think that it means the world in general pays more attention to, and values more highly, a little folly than it does much wisdom; but this somewhat simple statement is not in itself probable here, and does not well carry out the comparison. We must either read, as is done in the text, or understand it of a person in whose case a little folly spoils the effect of his general reputation for wisdom.

2. at his right hand. In many languages and at many times the figure of the right and left hand has been employed for wise and unwise conduct. Illustrations from the Greek poets will be found in Plumptre, who also reminds the reader of the significance of our word 'sinister,' which was, of course, originally 'left-handed,' and compare our common usage 'a left-handed compliment.'

3. when the fool walketh. Just as a wise or good man is known by his walk or conduct, so the foolish declares himself by his mere appearance. The latter part of the verse may either mean that owing to his self-conceit he says of every one else that they are fools, or, by his conduct, he declares himself to be a fool to every one that sees him.

4. leave not thy place. The counsel here given is that the courtier in presence of the ruler's rage should not readily throw up his position or in petulance withdraw from the royal presence, but should remember that patience is the best solver of many difficulties, and observe the counsel of Prov. xv. 1. The 'offences' referred to must surely be those of the ruler, not of the courtier, as many interpreters think.

5, 6. The state of things pictured in these verses has had many

6 folly is set in great [a] dignity, and the rich sit in low place.
7 I have seen servants upon horses, and princes walking as
8 servants upon the earth. He that diggeth a pit shall fall
into it; and whoso breaketh through a fence, a serpent
9 shall bite him. Whoso [b] heweth out stones shall be hurt
therewith; *and* he that cleaveth wood is endangered
10 thereby. If the iron be blunt, and one do not whet the
edge, then must he put to more strength: but wisdom is

---

[a] Heb. *heights*. [b] Or, *moveth stones*

---

clear illustrations in history, and we need not seek for any one special example as the one before the eyes of the writer, though the Greek period of Jewish history affords many parallels.

7. upon horses. The general custom in the earlier days in the East was for men of importance to ride upon asses, and the mention of horses here is taken as an evidence of the later date of the book (see Jer. xvii. 25, and for the general figure Prov. xix. 10).

8. This and the immediately following verses inculcate the spirit of caution as a practical manifestation of wisdom. Siegfried attributes the next four verses to one of the later editors.

a fence. This should rather be 'a wall,' since the serpent uses the latter as a hiding-place, and in pulling the wall down there is the danger of the serpent, in his anger at being disturbed, striking at the intruder. As to the interpretation of the passage, there are two possibilities. It may refer either to works of wanton destruction, which are apt to meet with retribution, or to the task of reformers, which is constantly being hindered by nervous or spiteful opponents.

9. heweth out. These words are better rendered 'moveth,' and the idea may be that of a man who moveth his neighbour's landmark (Deut. xix. 14), though others would take it to refer to the work of the quarryman (cf. Prov. xxvi. 27).

10. wisdom is profitable. There are many difficulties in the Hebrew of this verse, but they are purely linguistic, and the only words about which there is any question as to their translation are these latter ones. The meaning seems to be that just as it is a wiser thing for a man to sharpen his axe than to be compelled to put forth more strength with less effect if he fails to do so, so wisdom takes a man much further, and with less effort, than does brute force; so that we might render the words, 'Wisdom is profitable to set things to rights.'

profitable to direct. [a]If the serpent bite [b]before it be 11
charmed, then is there no advantage in [c]the charmer.
The words of a wise man's mouth are gracious; but the 12
lips of a fool will swallow up himself. The beginning of 13
the words of his mouth is foolishness: and the end of
[d]his talk is mischievous madness. A fool also multi- 14
plieth words: *yet* man knoweth not what shall be; and
that which shall be after him, who can tell him? The 15
labour of fools wearieth every one of them, for he know-
eth not how to go to the city. Woe to thee, O land, 16
when thy king is a [e]child, and thy princes eat in the

[a] Or, *Surely the serpent will bite where there is no enchantment, and the slanderer is no better*

[b] Heb. *without enchantment.*

[c] Heb. *the master of the tongue.*

[d] Heb. *his mouth.*

[e] Or, *servant*

---

11. If the serpent bite. The words as read in the R.V. text form a fairly clear parable, namely, if the serpent-charmer is not quick enough to quiet the snake before it bites him, then he is not up to his business. Just so is the wise man shown by his power to gain a quick advantage over his enemies. The reading of the margin arises from a misunderstanding of the word translated 'charmer,' which means literally 'lord of the tongue,' and so is rendered by some 'slanderer'; but the translation is not probable, and it would introduce a new and inappropriate idea.

14. A fool also multiplieth words. The irony of this verse consists in the fact that a fool will talk glibly about all sorts of mysteries, while he ignores man's real ignorance of the destinies of human life.

15. wearieth every one . . . for he knoweth not. This would be better rendered 'every one who knoweth not,' but the exact meaning of the words is not easy to discover. Of the many interpretations that have been given the two following are perhaps the best, and the first seems preferable to the second. (1) A traveller who seeks his direction to the city from a fool will be so confused by the latter's roundabout directions that he will not be able to find it. This is so common an experience that every one will sympathize with its force. (2) Only a person who has not wit enough to find his own way to the well-known city will be foolish enough to be disturbed by the counsels of a fool. For the idea of the verse cf. Isa. xxxv. 8.

16. a child. This word may also be translated 'servant,' and is

17 morning! Happy art thou, O land, when thy king is [a] the
son of nobles, and thy princes eat in due season, for
18 strength, and not for drunkenness! By slothfulness the
[b] roof sinketh in; and through idleness of the hands the
19 house leaketh. A feast is made for laughter, and wine
maketh glad the life: and money answereth all things.
20 Curse not the king, no, not in thy thought; and curse
not the rich in thy bedchamber: for a bird of the air
shall carry the voice, and that which hath wings shall tell
the matter.

[a] Or, *a free man*   [b] Or, *rafters sink*

---

thought by some here to be better so rendered, as it would then refer to a usurper who had ascended the throne, though of low origin; but the word 'child' gives an equally good meaning, since so frequently the child-ruler is under the domination of unscrupulous advisers. The statement seems too general to enable us to fix upon any one ruler as designated by it, though Haupt refers it to Alexander Balas, and Grätz, who translates 'servant,' to Herod the Great.

eat. This word signifies the self-indulgent feasting of a luxurious banquet. Plumptre quotes appropriately Catullus, xlvii. 5:

> 'Upon rich banquets sumptuously spread
> Still gorge you daily.'

Cf. also Isa. v. 11; Acts ii. 15.

17. the son of nobles. This rather favours the translation 'servant' in the previous verse, as the contrast would be between the true hereditary monarch and the base-born usurper. The court is here further represented as filled with men who are careful and well regulated in their habits, which, of course, makes for happiness and good government.

19. This verse seems to have even less connexion than usual in this section with those that precede or follow it. Some understand it as referring to the luxurious princes mentioned in verse 16; but if so, the reference is not clear, and it must be misplaced. Taken alone, its meaning is clear enough, namely, that in the case of those who are simply desiring the pleasures of life, money will purchase all they require. See Plumptre's commentary for illustrations from Latin and Greek authors.

20. bird of the air shall carry. This verse inculcates caution

[a] Cast thy bread [b] upon the waters: for thou shalt find **11**
it after many days. [c] Give a portion to seven, yea, even 2
unto eight; for thou knowest not what evil shall be upon
the earth. If the clouds be full of rain, they empty 3

[a] Or, *Send forth* [b] Heb. *upon the face of the waters.*
[c] Or, *Divide a portion into seven, yea, even into eight*

---

on the part of those who have to deal with men in high stations. The figure is probably only a proverbial one, though some have seen in it a reference to carrier-pigeons as employed by spies and informers; but, though appropriate, this is not requisite. Again Plumptre supplies many excellent literary illustrations.

xi. **1. Cast thy bread upon the waters.** This verse has given rise to many varying interpretations, but in general it seems to be rightly regarded as a proverbial utterance that was common to Semitic languages. In Delitzsch's commentary numerous examples are given, of which one may be here quoted—'Do good, cast thy bread into the water; thou shalt be repaid some day.' Stories are also told in Arabic and Hebrew writers of men whose conduct was guided by these proverbs, and who in obedience to them were extremely generous to the poor. We read of one man who had been in the habit of daily casting a cake of bread into the river, and who was thus the means of saving a life, a son of one of the Caliphs, and thus won for himself honour and fortune. Others, again, see in the words a reference to the venture of commerce; and it has been regarded as a proof that the writer lived in a great seaport like Alexandria, where he was familiar with the merchant venturers, who sent their corn and other produce to many lands in hope of a market. Again, the words have been used of the processes of agriculture, and the sowing of seed in irrigated fields, and even less likely interpretations have been suggested.

2. Give a portion to. If this translation is taken, the verse will then be another counsel to generosity without thought of an immediate return; but if we translate with the margin, as seems more probable, divide a portion into seven or eight parts, then it is a counsel of caution, as in the words of Antonio, in *The Merchant of Venice*:

> 'I thank my fortune for it,
> My ventures are not in one bottom trusted,
> Nor to one place; nor is my whole estate
> Upon the fortune of this present year.'

Either interpretation fits well with the closing part of the verse, but the former suits best the counsel of verse 1.

3. the clouds, &c. This verse states two examples of the fixed-

themselves upon the earth: and if a tree fall [a] toward the
south, or [a] toward the north, in the place where the tree
4 falleth, there shall it be. He that observeth the wind
shall not sow; and he that regardeth the clouds shall
5 not reap. As thou knowest not what is the way of the
[b] wind, *nor* how the bones *do grow* in the womb of her
that is with child; even so thou knowest not the work
6 of God who doeth all. In the morning sow thy seed,
and in the evening withhold not thine hand: for thou
knowest not which shall prosper, whether this or that, or
7 whether they both shall be alike good. Truly the light

[a] Or, *in* [b] Or, *spirit*

---

ness of natural law with the obvious purpose of suggesting that this may either paralyse or encourage exertion. If one regards the matter in the proper light he will see that, though in a sense things are likely to happen in the future as they have happened in the past, still no one is able perfectly to predict what will come, and should in consequence perform the duty that lies nearest at hand and trust the future to bring it to fruition.

4. He that observeth the wind. In illustration of the principle just stated is taken the conduct of the wise agriculturist, who will not be so fearful of atmospheric threatenings as to refrain from the proper processes to which each season calls him.

5. the way of the wind. A close parallel to this is to be found in John iii. 8, and it is possible that this passage is there in the mind of the speaker. The marvels of embryology, which in our day have been so studied as to afford even greater reason for amazement than at the time of the writer, are also used in illustration in Ps. cxxxix. 13-16; Prov. xxx. 19; and 2 Macc. vii. 22. If these common natural processes are beyond the ken of the student, how much less can he expect to understand the inner secret of the Divine working.

6. In the morning. This surely refers to the simple processes of agriculture, and, in a somewhat poetic form, advises a man to proceed with his necessary activity throughout the whole day; but some, with less probability, have regarded it as referring in a more general way to the work of life from its earliest days to its latest, while some confine its meaning to the duty of building up a family.

7, 8. These verses speak of 'the good of life, the mere living,' is sweet, and a pleasant thing it is for the eyes to behold the sun. [a] Yea, if a man live many years, let him rejoice 8 in them all; [b] but let him remember the days of darkness, for they shall be many. All that cometh is vanity.

Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth; and let thy 9 heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes: but know thou, that for all these things God will bring

[a] Or, *For* [b] Or, *and remember*

---

but remind us in the spirit of Ps. xc. 10, which is so common a mood of the Hebrew writers, that the end is sorrow. Cf. Kirstie Elliott's saying in the *Weir of Hermiston*: 'Mind that this life 's a disappointment, and a mouthful o' mools is the appointed end.' It is, however, set before us here in the spirit of Lippi's verse,

> 'Death for us all, and his own life for each.'

From verse 7 to xii. 7 Siegfried assigns to the first reviser of the book.

xi. 9—xii. 8. This section, which probably constitutes the closing section of the book, as it was originally written, begins with a counsel to youth to rejoice in its opportunities, and also to be mindful of its God, before 'the days of darkness' mentioned in verse 8 come upon it; but here the days of darkness are described in the most poetical language of one of the most famous passages in all literature.

9. Rejoice, O young man. These words form the basis of a famous old student's song that dates, in its original form, from the thirteenth century, beginning, 'Gaudeamus igitur iuvenes dum sumus.'

walk in the ways. These words are used in a sense quite opposite to that in which they are found in Num. xv. 39, and it is possible that the latter passage may have been in the writer's mind, and that he is here to a certain extent parodying it, or at all events, showing that it is not always wrong to follow one's natural instincts if only in pursuit of their dictation one remembers that the God who has bestowed them upon us will also require their proper employment at our hands. If, of course, we consider, as some do, that these last words are a pious reflection of another hand, then there is the less reason for surprise at the counsel given in the early part of the verse.

10 thee into judgement. Therefore remove [a] sorrow from
thy heart, and put away evil from thy flesh: for youth
12 and the prime of life are vanity. Remember also thy

[a] Or, *vexation* Or, *provocation*

---

10. sorrow. The word seems to cover all gloom and moroseness, and the word rendered 'evil' in the following clause is better understood of physical pain or defect than of moral evil.

prime of life. This word may be rendered either the dawn of life or, taking it from a different root, the season when a man's hair is black. If the latter be correct, then the contrast with the picture of old age that follows is more striking.

xii. **1. Remember also thy Creator.** As the words stand they constitute a counsel to become firmly rooted in religious faith in early life as a safeguard against the hopeless pessimism of an old age that knows none of the strength or consolation of religion. A fine use is made of this verse in the inscription encircling the dome of the beautiful school-chapel at Giggleswick. By a slight alteration of the original word some scholars translate 'well,' and understand it, in the light of Prov. v. 15, 18, and Song of Songs iv. 12 (see notes on these passages), 'Remember thy wife in the days of thy youth.' The figure was common in Oriental poetry for a woman, and here the writer is taken as advising faithful love in early manhood.

Immediately after this counsel, with the thought of the dark days that are to follow, begins the difficult and much-discussed passage contained in the first seven verses of the chapter. There are two main lines of interpretation. The one regards the whole passage as a vivid and poetic description of a sudden and violent storm, which is, of course, regarded as figurative of the darkness and gloom of old age. With part of the passage this idea accords excellently; but when we come to the fifth and following verses the analogy breaks down. The other leading interpretation is that which regards every detail as applicable to some part or function of the human body, and some of the commentaries read here almost like textbooks of anatomy. It is undoubted that the figure of a house for the human body is not uncommon, but whether the details of the figure are to be pressed is uncertain. It seems certain that the figure is dropped at least in the last clause of verse 5, and it is just possible that it may not be pursued after the close of verse 4. It may be, however, that the clause just referred to ('because man goeth, &c.') is a descriptive note designed to make the imagery clear, and that the figure is pursued in verse 5, while verse 7 gives the sober matter-of-fact statement as to death. The whole imagery, which seems to us somewhat extravagant when it is not distasteful, does not strike

Creator in the days of thy youth, or ever the evil days
come, and the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I
have no pleasure in them; or ever the sun, and the light, 2
and the moon, and the stars, be darkened, and the
clouds return after the rain: in the day when the keepers 3
of the house shall tremble, and the strong men shall bow
themselves, and the [a] grinders cease because they are

[a] Or, *grinding women*

---

the Oriental in the same light; and, though there may be difficulties about the interpretation of each detail, the general idea seems fairly clear.

2. the clouds return after the rain. As he has just before compared youth with springtime, so in this verse he compares age with winter, and to a gloomy winter in which no sooner is one rain-storm over than the heaven is once again clouded with the threatening of another. It is not only the winter of life, but also, if not illumined by the presence of God, 'the winter of our discontent.'

3. keepers of the house. The figure of the house and its attendants is begun in this verse, and though it is not very satisfactorily explained on the supposition either of a storm or of the decaying fortunes of a residence once famed for its splendour, the latter is, perhaps, the more satisfactory supposition. We have two tasks before us, the one being to fit in appropriately the language as it stands in its figurative sense, and the second to discover what the figures are supposed to describe. The trembling of the keepers of the house and the bowing of the strong men may refer to the feebleness and old age of the retainers, while, by the majority of interpreters, the keepers is understood of the hands and arms, and the strong men of the legs and feet.

grinders. This word is a feminine one, and refers to the women who generally worked the handmills (cf. Matt. xxiv. 41). Doughty has well described the ordinary custom thus: 'To grind their corn is the housewife's labour; and the dull murmur of the running millstone is, as it were, a comfortable voice of food in an Arabian village, when in the long sunny hours, there is often none other human sound' (see the passage quoted in Moffatt). It is difficult to see why the grinders should cease because of the smallness of their numbers. We might think that was all the more reason for their increasing their activities, and Haupt indeed thus translated, 'The grinders quit work, though they are few,' which gives a much better sense. In spite of being few, that is to say,

few, and those that look out of the windows be darkened,
4 and the doors shall be shut in the street; when the sound
of the grinding is low, and one shall rise up at the voice
of a bird, and all the daughters of music shall be brought

---

they are compelled to cease their activities because of their feebleness. The figure is also interpreted as meaning the teeth, which in old age are both few and feeble.

those that look out of the windows. The women in Eastern houses eagerly crowd to the lattices, that they may look out without being themselves seen, but in a house that had fallen upon evil days there might not be any desire to do so, or any women left with sufficient leisure or interest (cf. Prov. vii. 6 and Song of Songs ii. 9, with notes). Figuratively the words apply to the eyes, which become dim and powerless as old age creeps on.

4. the doors shall be shut. This is also a sign of the loss of fortune; where once all was hospitality and bustle are now closed and silent portals. But the interpretation is not so easy. Some think of the ears, others of the lips, and others still of other parts or functions of the body, which become disordered in old age.

sound of the grinding. This seems to revert to the figure of the previous verse, and consequently its interpretation is apt to do so also, some holding that it refers to the decay of the powers of hearing, while others regard it as a reference to the weakened powers of mastication. It is this doubling of metaphor, as well as the fact that from this point onward all reference to the house seems to be lost, that leads us to the conclusion that henceforth the figure of the household ceases, and we are only concerned with a highly allegorical description of man in his old age.

one shall rise up. This is generally supposed to mean that in old age sleep is so light that the least sound wakes the sleeper, even the twittering of birds at the dawn. Others, however, regard it as a reference to the 'childish treble' of an old man's voice, and render 'one shall approach to (i. e. one's voice shall become like) the voice of a bird.' The imagery is good, but it is doubtful whether the Hebrew expression will bear the rendering (cf. Isa. xxxviii. 14).

daughters of music. This either refers to singing women or to birds, and in either case the expression seems to signify that the ears of the old are too dull to appreciate the music (see 2 Sam. xix. 35). Some, however, regard the reference as being to the old man's disinclination to be troubled with entertainment, which in his youth had delighted him. Others consider that the reference, like the previous one, is to the changed note in the voice of the old. Striking illustrations of the passage will be found in

low; yea, they shall be afraid [a] of *that which is* high, and 5
terrors *shall be* in the way; and the almond tree shall
blossom, and the grasshopper [b] shall be a burden, and

[a] Or, of danger *from on high* [b] Or, *shall drag itself along*

Juvenal, *Sat.* x. 200-39, and the student should also consult an interesting article by Mr. Green in the *Expositor*, vol. ii, 1895, which shows the relationship between the class of metaphor here employed and those that are used in Icelandic poetry, revealing the interesting fact that this type of figure is not exclusively Oriental.

5. of that which is high. Literally, 'of the high,' which is generally taken to refer to a natural disinclination of old men to climb hills, while the following clause goes even further, and notes their unwillingness as a rule to venture upon any journey because of their increasing nervousness.

the almond tree. This and the following figures are very difficult to interpret, and have been understood in a large variety of ways. The most common explanation of the almond-tree is that which regards its white blossoms as symbolical of old age; and one of the best illustrations, not only of the phrase, but of the whole passage, is in a story quoted from the Talmud, where a learned rabbi, on being asked why he did not any longer frequent the school, replied, 'The mountain is snow, hoar-frost surrounds me, its dogs do not bark, nor its millers grind, and the scholars ask me if I am looking for what I have not lost'—by which language he referred to his white hair and beard, his failing voice, his few teeth, and his enfeebled vision. The word rendered 'blossom' may also mean 'reject' or 'loathe,' and consequently some take it literally as meaning that the old man no longer cares for dainties such as almonds, or, as a figurative reference, to his no longer being attractive to women, who will have nothing to do with an old man.

grasshopper. Or 'locust.' Some suppose that the thought still follows the subject of food, and that the old man does not reckon locusts any longer a tasty article of diet. There is no evidence, however, that they were ever regarded as luxuries, and certainly the reference in Mark i. 6 does not support it. Neither is it likely that the writer thinks of these insects annoying the old man by their sound; and still more absurd is the idea that the mere weight of a grasshopper would be an intolerable burden for the aged to carry, unless it were proved that some proverbial expression akin to 'the last straw that breaks the camel's back' were referred to. The word, however, may mean 'drags itself along,' and if so rendered the curious movement of the locust may be

[a] the caper-berry shall [b] fail: because man goeth to his
6 long home, and the mourners go about the streets: or
ever the silver cord be [c] loosed, or the golden bowl be

---

[a] Or, *desire* [b] Or, *burst* [c] Or, *snapped asunder*

taken as suggesting the stiff movement of the limbs in old age, and the bent back giving a remote resemblance to a locust. Other changes in the Hebrew have been suggested whereby the meaning is given that the ankles or other parts of the body are referred to, as becoming swollen or powerless in old age; but these seem to have arisen either from a misreading of the original or from a desperate attempt to make sense of what was otherwise difficult to understand.

caper-berry. If we take the word as it stands, the reference must be to the use of this fruit for medicinal purposes as a stimulant, either to the palate or as an aphrodisiac; but it is possible that the word does not mean the 'caper-berry' at all, but a kind of melon, which at one period of its growth has an appearance that remotely resembles white hair. The word rendered 'fail' may also mean 'burst,' and some, who thus translate it, consider the reference to be made to the bursting of the pods of some plant which thus sheds its seeds, and in that way is symbolical of death; but the idea is not only far-fetched, but improbable in itself. Others think that the words refer to certain organs of the body, whose failing powers are here described.

Haupt translates quite differently, following a reading of Wetzstein's, who, by the alteration of the vowel-points in the Hebrew word rendered 'caper-berry,' translates it 'poor one,' which, as in Ps. xxii. 20, is supposed to be a designation of the soul: 'Inert lies the chrysalis till the soul emerges'—which, of course, refers to the enfeebled body waiting till the spirit is set at liberty.

the mourners. This is variously understood as referring to the professional mourners who await a summons to the old man's obsequies, or of the funeral procession. Cf. Forbush's paraphrase of this clause:

'So man unto his House Eternal goes;
The portals once for entrance ope, then close.
Along the sodden street the mourners trudge—
But what is done behind those Doors, who knows?'

6. silver cord be loosed. The last word should probably be 'snapped, and the figure seems certainly that of a hanging lamp—the difficulty in this interpretation being to understand how or why the golden bowl should be broken; and, therefore, some understand that it is a bowl of more fragile material, filled with oil of golden

broken, or the pitcher be broken at the fountain, or the
wheel broken at the cistern; and the dust return to the 7
earth as it was, and the spirit return unto God who gave
it. Vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher; all is vanity. 8

And further, because the Preacher was wise, he still 9
taught the people knowledge; yea, he [a] pondered, and
sought out, *and* set in order many proverbs. The 10
Preacher sought to find out [b] acceptable words, and that
which was written uprightly, *even* words of truth.

[a] Or, *gave ear* [b] Heb. *words of delight.*

---

colour. It may be, however, that in this case the thing signified has been permitted to pass over into the metaphor, and force it beyond what it will naturally bear. The whole purpose of the verse is obviously to designate, in highly poetical language, the dissolution of death; and we need hardly concern ourselves much as to whether the bowl means the skull, the silver cord the spinal marrow, the pitcher the arteries, and the cistern the heart; or whether any of the other suggested interpretations that ring the changes upon these is correct or not. Neither need we decide, on lines of the more general interpretation of Delitzsch, as to which is body and which is spirit—but take the two beautiful and touching figures as pathetically descriptive of a final breaking-up of the long companionship between the body and its informing intelligence, which means death.

7. the dust return. As has been noted, this is a distinct reference to Gen. ii. 7; but it does not mean that the writer had any clear conception of a personal immortality, still less of a spiritual resurrection.

8. Vanity of vanities. Here the oft-recurring note meets us for the last time, and is, in all probability, the closing words of the book as it was originally written; and its temper is well summed up in two lines of Francis Quarles:

'His breath's a bubble, and his days a span—
'Tis glorious misery to be born a man.'

9–14. These verses constitute a closing descriptive note of the writer and his purpose from some later hand, or, as Siegfried supposes, from three later hands (see Introduction, p. 216).

9. he still taught. These words probably refer to the traditional author of the book, Solomon, and are descriptive of what was generally regarded as his main intellectual activity.

10. acceptable. Better, 'pleasing.'

11 The words of the wise are as goads, and as nails well
fastened are *the words of* the [a] masters of assemblies,
12 *which* are given from one shepherd. [b] And furthermore,
my son, be admonished: of making many books there is
no end; and much study is a weariness of the flesh.
13 [c] *This is* the end of the matter; all hath been heard:
fear God, and keep his commandments; for [d] this is the

[a] Or, *collectors of sentences*

[b] Or, *And as for more than these, my son, be warned*

[c] Or, *Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter*

[d] Or, *this is* the duty of *all men*

---

uprightly may be rendered 'in correct form,' while the closing description, 'words of truth,' refer to the inner nature of the message.

11. goads. This refers, of course, to the stimulating effect of good teaching and of all truth, just as Socrates spoke of himself as 'the Athenian gad-fly.' But the latter part of the verse is not at all clear. The Hebrew, as will be seen from the form of the R. V., is helped out in the English translation by the insertion of various words, the correctness of which is not at all certain. They may be rendered somewhat as follows: 'Like well-driven nails are the collections of sayings made by one master collector.' This, at least, makes intelligible English, and probably comes as near the true meaning of the passage as we are likely to get. What seems to be eulogized is a careful and well-ordered collection of memorable sayings, not strung together loosely as in the Book of Proverbs itself, but well-knit, as in the treatise that has just been closed.

12. furthermore. Perhaps this means 'beyond these,' that is, outside the writings here specified, or perhaps 'by these writings be admonished.'

many books. This in itself points to a considerably late date, and in all probability to acquaintance with the literatures of many nations. If the words had force then, they have undoubtedly much more force to-day, when we are easily tempted to dissipate our energies in either the reading or writing of useless books, and when we might with profit lay to heart not only this counsel, but that of the stoic emperor—that we should free ourselves from the thirst for books.

study. This is the only place in which the word occurs, and it may possibly, as Siegfried thinks, mean 'disputation.'

13. fear God. In this verse an orthodox conclusion is given to whole *duty* of man. For God shall bring every work into 14 judgement, [a] with every hidden thing, whether it be good or whether it be evil.

[a] Or, *concerning*

---

the whole matter, and a universal law of conduct is laid down, because the last words of the verse should be translated 'This is every man's duty.'

14. with every hidden thing. Rather, 'upon every, &c.' The judgement, that is to say, is itself a revelation of the secrets of life—an 'opening of the books,' as the Apocalypse phrases it.

THE SONG OF SONGS

INTRODUCTION

AND

REVISED VERSION WITH ANNOTATIONS

THE SONG OF SONGS

INTRODUCTION

THE title of the little book is 'The Song of Songs, which is Solomon's.' This is obviously a descriptive title given by scribe or collector, embodying either his own or the traditional opinion about the book. The form of description indicates that the Song was considered not the finest of Solomon's lyrical productions, but that it was regarded as the best of all the songs known to the Hebrew world. The Hebrew writers attribute to Solomon not only great wisdom, but much literary activity. We are told that 'he spake three thousand proverbs, and his songs were a thousand and five.' There probably underlies this statement the admiration of a later generation, and also, perhaps, a slight flavour of the courtiers' flattery. Anyhow, we are without a specimen, so far as we know, of the royal poet's productions. It was customary to attribute writings to any one who had a great name in tradition as an author. Thus it came to pass that the books of the Pentateuch were attributed to Moses, and the bulk of the Psalter to David; and as anonymity seems to have been distasteful to the Hebrews, everything the authorship of which was unknown was wedded to some great name. In the case of the Song of Songs this opinion is not merely speculative, but is proved, so far as anything can be, by the character of the language. The proof is largely technical, and the evidence in detail can only be estimated by students of the original; but one or two points may be explained even to the English reader. The form of the relative pronoun in every instance, save in the first verse, is not that which is usual in classical Hebrew, but is confined either to the very latest works, which were composed after the exile, or to certain poems and narratives (e. g. the Song of Deborah, Judges iv, 2 Kings vi. 11 in the narrative of the life of Elijah) which emanate from North Israel. The fact that the ordinary form of the relative occurs in the first verse shows that it was written by a scribe who was accustomed to the classical language. Words occur that are not Semitic, but obviously borrowed from foreign languages. More detailed accounts of these will be found in the notes on the respective passages, but meanwhile there may be cited the word for *henna* (i. 14, iv. 13), which is probably Aramaic or Greek; the word for 'litter' or 'palanquin,' which is either Sanskrit or Greek; the word for 'saffron,' which is almost in form our word 'crocus,' is either Aramaic, Greek, or Arabic; while, finally, the word rendered in the R. V. 'orchard' is really 'paradise,' which is probably Persian in origin, though it is found in almost the same form in late Assyrian, Arabic, and Greek (see iv. 13 and also Eccles. ii. 5). Of course, it is barely possible, as Dr. Driver suggests, that these words 'might have reached Israel through Solomon's connexions with the East.' This is not, however, so probable as is the conclusion that these words point to a late period in Hebrew history for the origin of the book. The force of this type of argument may be made quite clear to the English reader by the consideration that such loan-words as 'tiffin' (Anglo-Indian for lunch), 'coolie,' 'rickshaw,' and many others, bear testimony to our connexion with the East, and could not have entered the English vocabulary until our countrymen came into contact with the lands from whose languages they are derived—while, of course, technical words such as 'telephone' and 'Marconigram' point exactly to the date of the discovery of the things they signify. To say, however, that the book in its present form dates from the later period of Hebrew literature is not to deny that there may be earlier elements in it, and subsequently we may be in a position to see how these earlier elements became worked up into their present form, and to discover the significance of such proof.

Another indication of the comparative lateness of the book is derived from its position in the Hebrew canon and the discussions that arose about its finding a place in the Old Testament. The final decision as to the Hebrew canon was only arrived at about A. D. 100, and this book was one of those whose place was most uncertain. Undoubtedly the question of the date of its origin was not that which weighed most with those who finally agreed to accept it, but rather its character, and there can be little doubt that had the opinion not prevailed that it consisted of an allegory descriptive of the relation between God and His chosen people it would never have been admitted into the sacred writings.

This brings us to the consideration of what the real character of the book is, and upon that subject very wide diversity of opinion has always existed. We shall consider first the earliest recorded idea about it, namely, that it was an allegory. To the thought of the Jewish rabbis it suggested the figure of a spiritual marriage between Yahweh and His people. The figure was a common one in the Old Testament, being probably derived, as Professor Robertson Smith suggested, from the sensual heathen conceptions of the older Semitic religions, in which the Baal or 'Lord' was regarded as the husband of the nation who worshipped Him, and which gave rise to many of the immoral practices described and denounced by the Hebrew prophets. Such gross physical conceptions were prevalent, for example, in the days of Hosea, and a large part of his great service was to purify the thought of the people, while he yet maintained the figurative language of the older religion, and applied it to the realm of the spiritual. It is, of course, conceivable that this metaphor might have been employed in a more elaborate way, so as to produce a marriage-song in which the speaker was Jahweh and the bride the faithful Israel. There are passages in the

Book of Isaiah that come very near to this actual method of literary procedure. Thus, in a well-known passage, the prophet writes, 'But Zion said, Jehovah hath forsaken me and the Lord hath forgotten me'; to which complaint the Divine reply is given, 'Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yes, these may forget, yet will not I forget thee. Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of My hands (cf. Song of Songs viii. 6, 'Set me as a seal upon thine heart, as a seal upon thine arm') . . . as I live, saith the Lord, thou shalt surely clothe thee . . . as with an ornament, and gird thyself, like a bride' (Isa. xlix. 14-21). Again, we read, in Isa. lxii. 1-5, as follows, 'For Zion's sake will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake will I not rest, until her righteousness go forth as brightness (cf. Song of Songs vi. 10) and her salvation as a lamp that burneth . . . thou shalt also be a crown of beauty in the hand of the Lord, and a royal diadem in the hand of thy God (cf. Song of Songs iii. 11). Thou shalt no more be termed Forsaken; . . . but thou shalt be called Hephzibah (married), for the Lord delighteth in thee . . . for as a young man marrieth a virgin, so shall thy sons marry thee: and as the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee.' Still, there is a vast difference between the beautiful language of such general descriptions and the elaborate detail of the Song of Songs, a difference that makes it almost inconceivable that the latter could have been originally intended as an allegory of the spiritual relation between God and the people of His choice. This method of interpretation, however, once started by the rabbis, became the dominant one in the Christian Church. It not only claimed in its support the authority of Jewish scholars, but there were certain references in the New Testament that strengthened the idea. Our Lord spoke of Himself as the bridegroom (Matt. ix. 15); He uttered parables in which He was designated by the same name (Matt. xxv.

1–13), and in which the kingdom of heaven was described as a wedding-feast (Matt. xxii. 1–13), while Paul sees in the marriage relationship a perfect parable of that which should exist between Christ and the Church (Eph. v. 23–32), and the Book of Revelation, in the song of the redeemed at the marriage of the Lamb, describes the bride as arrayed for her Lord 'in fine linen bright and pure,' and the heavenly Jerusalem is described as a holy city 'coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband.' The earliest extant Christian exposition of the book is that of Origen, in the third century; and while he admits that it probably was written as a marriage-song in honour of Solomon's union with an Egyptian princess, he has no question about its real value lying in its allegorical interpretation, and he repeats in his own form what had been the expressed opinion of a Rabbi of the first century, that 'the whole world was not worthy of the day in which this sublime Song was given to Israel; for all the Scriptures are holy, but this sublime Song is most holy.' So Origen writes, 'Blessed is he who sings holy songs, but more blessed is he who sings the Song of Songs.'

From the days of Origen onwards the mystical interpretation of the book continued to hold sway in the Church with very few exceptions, and in the Middle Ages in particular it passed the extreme limits of probability. The most famous of the mediaeval interpreters was St. Bernard, from whose pen we possess eighty-six sermons on the first two chapters alone. Even Wesley could not believe that the descriptions of the book could possibly apply to any human love or physical marriage, and held that it must be understood allegorically. It was not until the end of the eighteenth century that some of the German interpreters hit upon the true meaning, and conspicuous among these was the poet Herder, who saw that the book was in line with much similar erotic poetry of the East. This type of interpretation, which persists in many quarters till the present day, is familiar to us in the language of Christian hymns. It occurs in the well-known verses by the late Mrs. A. R. Cousin, founded on the letters of Samuel Rutherford, who himself was extremely prone to use the amatory imagery of the Song of Songs. Two verses may be quoted in illustration:

'There the red rose of Sharon
Unfolds its heartmost bloom,
And fills the air of Heaven
With ravishing perfume:
Oh! to behold it blossom,
While by its fragrance fanned,
Where glory—glory dwelleth
In Immanuel's land.

'Oh! I am my Beloved's,
And my Beloved 's mine!
He brings a poor, vile sinner
Into His "house of wine."
I stand upon His merit,
I know no other stand,
Not e'en where glory dwelleth
In Immanuel's land.'

The same idea also underlies Mr. Mudie's verses beginning:

'I lift my heart to Thee,
Saviour Divine!
For Thou art all to me,
And I am Thine.
Is there on earth a closer bond than this,
That my Beloved 's mine, and I am His.'

One of the most familiar examples is found in Bonar's hymn 'I lay my sins on Jesus,' in a verse which is not included in all hymn books, but belongs to the original form, and runs:

'I rest my soul on Jesus,
This weary soul of mine;
His right hand me embraces,
I on His breast recline:
I love the name of Jesus,
Emmanuel, Christ, the Lord;
Like fragrance on the breezes
His name abroad is poured.'

In the quaint *Emblems* of Francis Quarles, the reader will find many poems suggested by the Song of Songs, where this allegorical interpretation is carried to an excessive extent. One verse may here be quoted, but, in order to understand the peculiar character of the poems, the book itself must be consulted. In Book iv, No. 11, based on Song of Songs iii. 2, we read:

'Where have my busy eyes not pryed? oh, where?
Of whom hath not my threadbare tongue demanded?
I searched this glorious city; he's not here:
  I sought the country; she stands empty-handed:
I searched the court; he is a stranger there:
  I asked the land; he's ship'd: the sea; he's landed:
    I climbed the air, my thoughts began to aspire
    But ah! the wings of too-bold desire,
Soaring too near the sun, were singed with sacred fire.'

In the original form of the favourite hymn by St. Bernard,

'Jesu, the very thought of Thee,'

there are verses, omitted in the ordinary hymn books, which are much more closely allied with the imagery of the Song of Songs than are those in general use; for example:

'Thy kiss is bliss beyond compare,
  A bliss for evermore;
Oh, that Thy visits were less rare,
  And not so quickly o'er!'

One of the most interesting of modern examples of this use of the poem is in Miss Christina Rossetti's beautiful verses beginning,

'Passing away, saith the world, passing away.'

The best taste of the Christian interpreters has saved the majority of them from the extravagance of interpreting every verse of the book in this allegorical way, and while, as we have seen, it is admitted that the general idea of love and marriage has the approval of the New Testament writers, and even of our Lord Himself, as a legitimate figure whereby to describe the relation of the Church to Christ, it is quite different from assuming that all the language of this book can be so applied [1]. It is, moreover, a vicious principle to adopt, if the book was never written with any allegorical idea or purpose; and that this is true will appear later.

Closely allied to the allegorical interpretation is what has been called the 'typical' one. In this case it is recognized that the book was originally written in honour of the marriage of Solomon, but that that circumstance was designed to constitute a type of the relation between God and His people. In effect, of course, this style of interpretation comes to the same results as the former one. It is only the supposed origin that differs, so that all that has been said in objection to the former applies also to this method of exegesis.

The idea that the book was an example of the Hebrew drama arose even among the allegorists, though it developed much more rapidly among those who regarded the book as a poem of purely natural affection. When the idea was first mooted, the conception prevailing was that Solomon was the hero of the piece, and some considered that the voluptuous king had carried away the wife of a simple shepherd to his harem in Jerusalem, and that the story related her virtuous resistance to the king's allurements, and celebrated her return to her shepherd-husband; while others considered that the king had carried away a village maiden betrothed to her shepherd-lover, and that the final scenes celebrated her deliverance from the dangers of the court and the triumph of virtuous love. Out of these ideas have sprung the two main schools of dramatic interpretation among modern scholars. The first school consider Solomon to be the hero all through. In the opening scenes he is tempting the girl, whom he has conveyed to his palace in Jerusalem, to become a regular member of the harem, and in his infamous intention he is seconded by the other ladies of the harem themselves. The maiden is supposed to escape from the royal palace, and to be wooed again by the king, who now appears in the humble guise of a shepherd. In the rustic simplicity of her northern home the young girl converts him from his polygamous practices to the true idea of marriage, and persuades him to enter into a loving and loyal union with herself, abandoning all the voluptuous courses that had marred his life. In addition to the inherent improbabilities that such a theory brings into the poem itself, there is, of course, no historical evidence of any such conversion on the part of Solomon; and it seems very unlikely that any Hebrew writer would have imagined such a situation for the great king.

---

[1] Thence the book was long a favourite from which to choose texts for communion addresses, and we are told that the Bible of the famous evangelical preacher Mc'Cheyne showed more signs of usage at the Song of Songs than in any other place.

The second dramatic interpretation is that which regards not Solomon but the shepherd-lover as the hero of the piece. In this case the drama opens with the presence of the young maid at the court of Solomon as before, but her speeches are made not to the king, but to her northern lover in his absence, though there are some interpreters who imagine that the bold swain somehow managed to find access to the royal palace, and that a sort of Romeo and Juliet dialogue takes place from the lattice of the women's apartment. The maid is then supposed so to work upon the feelings of Solomon, that of his own free will he grants her her liberty, and the poem ends with the joy of the lovers' meeting on the eve of their wedding amid the rustic surroundings of their northern home. This scheme of interpretation will be found in variously modified forms in many commentaries more fully indicated in the list of literature. But the great objection, if it is not indeed a fatal one, to all such theories, is the fact that there are no indications within the poem itself of its being a drama. As has been said, there are not even the 'stage directions' that we find in the Book of Job, where the entrance and exit of the various characters is at least indicated. Thus, on examining the works of a number of the interpreters who hold this theory, we find that the drama is given in each case a different complexion according to the fancy of the individual, one part being assigned by one writer to one speaker, and by a second authority to another. If a drama is so uncertain as this in its indications of construction and of the parts played by the individual actors, all that can be said is that the dramatist was a most unskilful person, and that he failed utterly to produce the work he purposed. But far from being inartistic, the Song of Songs shows the very highest art, and we cannot, therefore, suppose that its author failed to indicate the very nature of the book he was writing. It would not, of course, be an impossible task to construct a drama out of many of the lyrical love-poems we possess in various literatures. We might take the Lesbia poems of Catullus, for example, and weave them into a sort of dramatic narrative; and, by more or less ingenious arrangement, a similar result might be attained with the love-songs of Heine or of Burns; but no one supposes that such a result would have any other effect than to prove the misapplied ingenuity of the man who produced such an artificial performance. Similarly, we rise from the perusal of the most ingenious reconstructions of the Song of Songs with a stronger consciousness of the perverse cleverness of the authors of the commentaries than with a strong persuasion of the correctness of their theory.

There remains to be considered what may be called the historical or natural interpretation of the book. The pioneer in this direction was Herder, whose poetic temperament enabled him to divine, in spite of the allegorists whose interpretation was then in favour, the true character of the book. His idea was that it consisted of a collection of separate love-songs, but he did not find many supporters until quite recent times, when the researches of a German consul at Damascus not only gave life to Herder's theories, but, by adducing the evidence of present-day customs in Palestine, showed how the songs contained in the book might in all probability have originated, and that the 'unchanging East' was in this, as in so many other matters, its own best interpreter. The gist of the discovery lay in the description of the marriage customs now prevalent in Northern Syria, and centred round the uses made of the 'threshing-board' in these customs. The 'threshing-board' is an agricultural implement named several times in the Old Testament (cf. Hos. x. 11; Isa. xli. 15; Job xli. 30), and consists of two boards of wood bound together by two cross-timbers. It is oblong in shape, measuring about five feet by four. The boards are bent upward in front so that the whole has somewhat the appearance of a rough sledge. On the under surface are let in lumps of rough basaltic rock. To this rude implement are yoked one or two oxen. The grain is then spread over the threshing-floor, which itself is a level surface of about twenty to thirty feet in diameter, with a row of large stones round it to prevent the straw from being scattered. The thresher stands upon the rough sledge and proceeds to drive his oxen round about the threshing-floor till the process of threshing is completed. This same rough sledge is used by the peasants for two other purposes, as a bier at funerals, and as a seat of honour for the bride and bridegroom at a wedding. It is this latter practice that concerns us here. As in many other countries—for example, Norway—the wedding festivities are kept up for a week. On the day of the wedding processions led by the band of young men known as the 'companions of the bridegroom' take place, and dances are also a prominent feature of the day, particularly the sword-dance, which is sometimes danced by a man and sometimes by a woman, and is always accompanied by a song in praise of the beauties of the bridal pair. On the morning after the marriage the young husband and wife enter upon what has been called 'the best time in their life,' for during the seven days that follow they play the part of king and queen, and have their court to wait upon them in the person of the youths and maidens of the neighbouring community. The young men march with the threshing-board upon their shoulders, singing a joyful song, to the threshing-floor. There they erect a platform about six feet in height, place the board above it, and cover the latter with a carpet. Upon this are laid two gaily-embroidered cushions, which form the throne for the 'king and queen.' Before a mock court, with much buffoonery and frequently coarse jesting, proof is led of the consummation of the marriage, and thereafter a grand dance is begun in honour of the wedded pair. Here, again, a song is sung descriptive of the physical beauty of the two, and of their raiment and jewels. This descriptive song is technically known as a *wasf*, parallels to which are to be found in the Song of Songs (iv. 1–7, v. 10–16, vi. 4–7, vii. 1–10). This peculiar song is said to have more or less of a traditional and stereotyped form. Its character, therefore, accounts for the resemblance between the various passages above referred to in the Song of Songs. From this time onward the marriage festivities are in progress, and they consist largely of songs and dances, the former having both solos and choruses, and the latter for the main part performed for the delectation of the bride and bridegroom, but occasionally joined in by these latter. These customs, as one may easily perceive, throw a great light upon the Song of Songs, and many modern commentators hold, as does, indeed, the present writer, that along these lines the true interpretation of the book is to be found. Objection has been taken to the theory from the supposed unity of the book as it now stands; but that unity is, as we have hinted, considerably exaggerated by the supporters of the dramatic theory, who are the main objectors to this one, and there seems little difficulty in Budde's assumption that what unity is observable is due to the hand of the final editor. It does not appear that there is much validity in the objection that we have not here enough songs to serve for the whole week, for surely we can easily understand that any editor might take a selection of the best from those known to him, or that one series out of many sung during the wedding festivities should be here given. In fact, the very form of the title, 'The Song of Songs,' seems to indicate this, and to show that out of a large selection of songs with which he was familiar this writer has chosen deliberately the best specimens. Again, in the description of the modern Syrian wedding, we are informed that some of the songs deal with war, and because no such songs occur in this book we are bidden reject this theory of their origin; but the process of selection may account also for the absence of these, the purpose of the writer being to confine his selection to those which dealt with the marriage proper. Other lines of objection to the theory will be considered in the commentary, but meantime sufficient has been said to show that this theory of the book's origin is more probable than any of those previously considered[1]. It does not seem desirable to allow our ideas of the proper interpretation of the book to be governed by the uses that can be made of it for practical exposition or theological teaching. The advocates of the dramatic theory make much of the fact that the book as so interpreted is a vindication of pure love and the Divine purpose of marriage as a spiritual union. But even if this were so it would not suffice to justify a mistaken theory about the book, and there is surely as much to be said for the idea that the Bible recognizes the poetry of lyric love, which is common to all the literatures of the world, and springs up naturally in the human soul. If we have here a collection of such poems as they sprang fresh from the heart and lips of some of the unknown singers of ancient Israel, and were permitted, even if under the cloak of a false conception of their purpose, and a wrong theory of their origin, to find a place in the sacred canon, we can only rejoice that the class of literature which probably more than any other touches responsive chords in the heart of humanity receives the stamp of the Divine recognition and approval. We may be told that on this theory there are several passages in the book that deal too frankly and openly with sexual passion; but after all there may be a deeper purity about the frank recognition of such subjects, and straightforward, passionate language about them, than in much of the veiled hints of indecent prudery and the attempt to hide what may be better openly stated than uncleanly imagined. Besides, we have to remember that manners and customs change—that things which seem coarse to us do not have that aspect to men of other lands and of other ages. A century or two has made a great difference in that matter in England, and the crossing from one nation to another will even to-day change one's whole ideas about such matters. Morality, it is true, is something far removed from, and far higher than, convention; but the two are so closely united that men are often tempted to reckon what is to them the unconventional as being necessarily the immoral. After all, the book is not a book for children, but for men and women; and with the understanding of men and women, to whom the difficult subject of sex and its relations is always present, and constitutes one of the hardest questions of conduct and of life, this book must be read; and perhaps from it we may not fail to derive some great and valuable lessons—not the least being that marriage and all it involves is in its original Divine intention not only one of the purest of earthly joys, but one of the holiest of the Divine purposes.

---

[1] The Rev. W. M. Christie tells me that in the neighbourhood of Safed he found many peasants' songs bearing the strongest resemblance to the Song of Songs, but failed to procure them as he did not then see their full significance.

LITERATURE.

For English students of the Song of Songs excellent introductions will be found in *A Biblical Introduction*, by Bennett and Adeney; and *The Wisdom-Literature of the Old Testament*, by Davison, and also in the English translation of Cornill's Old Testament Introduction. The introductions of Driver and Cornill should also be consulted. Almost all the English commentaries treat the book from the dramatic point of view. The best for ordinary readers is that by Harper in the *Cambridge Bible*. The older commentaries of Ginsburg and Delitzsch should also be consulted, especially by those who understand the original. Adeney's volume in the *Expositor's Bible* is a sympathetic exposition on the dramatic theory, with an interesting chapter on the introduction and also on the mystical interpretations of the book. Margoliouth's edition in the *Temple Bible* should be consulted, for its introduction and notes, though very short, are suggestive. Harper's volume contains a fresh translation in Appendix I, and another and most interesting poetic translation by Fox is to be found in the *Expository Times*, vol. vii. The student should also consult the article 'Song of Songs' in *HDB*. by Rothstein, which contains a somewhat original idea about its composition, and is very full of information, also the article, 'Canticles' by Robertson Smith in *Enc. Brit.*, and by Cheyne in *Enc. Bibl.* Budde's theory, which is followed in this commentary, is most accessible to the English reader in his article in *The New World*, 1894. Readers of German will find Budde's commentary in the *Kurzer Handcomm. zum A. T.*, 1898, and Siegfried's, of most value. Admirable illustrations of the thought and form of expression of the Song are to be found in Dalman's *Palästinischer Diwan*, 1901.

Since the following commentary was written the author has seen Paul Haupt's *Biblische Liebeslieder*, but hardly any reference to it has been possible. The ideas contained in it were, however, already known to the writer from the Professor's papers in *The American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures.* The little volume is of great interest, and is recommended to advanced students. The notes are full of most interesting literary illustrations.

NOTE.—There is a very extraordinary and original study of the Song of Songs by Michelet in his *Bible de L'Humanité*, part ii. chap. 6. He sees clearly that the work is not a religious allegory, nor in his judgement a truly Jewish book at all, but a song of Syria, burning with the passion and sensual feeling of the race, filled, as he says, 'with a kind of fever like an autumn wind, delightful, but deadly.' The study was written in 1864, and is an interesting example of how the literary critic sometimes arrives at a conclusion almost by instinct, which is afterwards verified by investigations of scholarship. It is to this passage of Michelet that Lafcadio Hearn refers in one of his letters, where, speaking of the Song of Songs, he writes, 'I love it more than ever. But Michelet, the passionate free-thinker, the divine prose-poet, the bravest lover of the beautiful, has written a terrible chapter upon it. No lesser mind dare touch the subject now with sacrilegious hand.' It would have been interesting to have seen what that erratic genius had to say about the book. One other interesting literary reference may be added. In Balzac's *Lily of the Valley* he describes a sunset as 'an eternal Song of Songs by which nature bids her creatures love.'

THE SONG OF SONGS

THE Song of songs, which is Solomon's. 1

Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth: 2

---

i. **1.** This title (see Introduction, p. 287) is probably the work of some later scribe, though it is possible that it was a description given by the editor who collected the songs that are to follow. The idea contained in the words is that the song herein attributed to Solomon is the best of all the songs in existence. If the theory of the book's origin contained in this commentary be the correct one, then this note must have been the work of the later editor, who regarded it as a complete unity. In all probability, however, it really consists of a collection of lyrics by some unknown poet or poets.

i. 2-7. These verses consist of a solo sung by the bride interspersed with verses of chorus on the lips of the maidens who are her companions. These latter chorus verses are found in verse 4, &c. and are fully indicated beneath. The solo consists of an expressed longing for the affectionate embrace of the bridegroom, whose praise is celebrated, and then the bride describes her own charms in a modest manner, accounting for her sunburnt appearance by the outdoor work she has been compelled to perform, while she ends with an appeal to be made conversant with the place of her bridegroom's shepherd duties, that she may henceforth be his constant companion.

In the dramatic interpretation these opening verses are put on the lips of the women of the harem interrupted by a soliloquy on the part of the maiden who appeals to her absent lover, and in verses 5 and 6 addresses the court ladies, while in verse 7 she again turns to her absent lover, and is mocked (verse 8) by the inhabitants of the harem. There could not be a clearer instance of the absurdity and impossibility of the dramatic theory.

2. Let him kiss me. At the outset we strike the passionate note of the whole poem. Here the girl, 'sick with love,' as she elsewhere describes herself, mindful of the happy experiences of the preceding day, longs for the intimate fellowship of her husband, and appeals to be freed from the publicity of the festive assembly that she may enjoy that private intercourse.

For thy love is better than wine.
3 Thine ointments have a goodly fragrance;
Thy name is *as* ointment poured forth;
Therefore do the [a] virgins love thee.

[a] Or, *maidens*

For thy love. Cf. iv. 10. Sweeter to her, more stimulating and sustaining than any cordial, is her husband's newly-tasted love, for the draughts of which she eagerly and frankly longs. The word rendered 'love' should really be translated 'caresses,' and designates the outward expression of affection. The LXX translates it 'breasts,' probably through a misunderstanding of the Hebrew word, as that meaning does not appear suitable or probable in this case.

3. Thine ointments. There is in this verse a play upon the words, which in the original represent ointment and name[1]. Another example of the same thing is found in Eccles. vii. 1. The Eastern love of perfumes is the reason of the praise here given, and one remembers the many instances in the Bible of the use of such precious ointments. The practice of using such unguents had probably the twofold purpose of allaying heat-irritation and concealing unpleasant odours of the body, so difficult to prevent in Eastern lands. The making of these perfumes was an important trade (cf. iii. 6 and note). The composition of the anointing oil for the priests is found in Exod. xxx. 23-25. The practice of using these fragrant oils was a daily one, and, as with other ancient peoples, the regular consequent of the bath (cf. Ezek. xvi. 9). Their use was a sign of joy (Prov. xxvii. 9, which see; Matt. vi. 7), as their absence was a sign of mourning (2 Sam. xiv. 2; Micah vi. 15). To be able to indulge in their free use is a sign of prosperity (Eccles. ix. 8; Ps. xcii. 10). The employment of perfumes of peculiarly special combination was a sign of wealth and luxury, and might, as in the case of Hezekiah, be part of the treasure of a king's house (2 Kings xx. 13; Amos vi. 6). The practice of welcoming guests by anointing them is alluded to in Ps. xxiii. 5, where the failure to do so was a mark of discourtesy (Luke vii. 46). As a sign of special honour conferred upon a beloved guest we have the touching story of the anointing of Jesus at Bethany (John xii. 1-8), and parallel passages. (On the whole subject the articles 'Anointing,' 'Oil,' 'Perfume,' in *HDB.* should be consulted.)

ointment poured forth. Cf. John xii. 3, 'The house was filled with the odour of the ointment.'

virgins. The reference is probably to the girl companions

---

[1] *shem* and *shemen.*

Stream from Lebanon: Waterfall on the Abana

Draw me; we will run after thee:
The king hath brought me into his chambers:
We will be glad and rejoice in thee,
We will make mention of thy love more than of wine:
[a] Rightly do they love thee.

[a] Or, *In uprightness*

---

of the young bride, 'bridesmaids,' as we should say, who formed part of the chorus of singers who provided the entertainment during the wedding festival. This is a much more simple explanation than the extremes to which the supporters of the dramatic theory are driven to explain the words.

4. Draw me. There is considerable difficulty here in deciding upon the grammatical connexion of the word. The R. V. punctuation makes the words 'draw me' stand alone, in which case they constitute the appeal of the bride to the bridegroom, and the following words are sung in chorus by her companions. If, as seems more natural, in the original, the words 'after thee' are connected closely with 'draw me,' then in all probability 'king' may be taken as vocative, and the chorus words consist of the phrase 'We will run, O king,' when the bride would continue, 'He hath brought me into his chambers.' If the punctuation of the R. V. is to stand, we must regard the words 'The king hath brought me into his chambers' as a kind of mocking answer made by the bride to her companions, reminding them that, however much they attempt to follow, they will find one door closed against them.

We will be glad. The next two lines constitute a chorus of the bridegroom's praise re-echoing the words already used by the bride in verse 2. The latter part of the clause is better rendered 'We will celebrate thy caresses more than wine.' Here, again, we have the union of the praise of love and wine so common in the erotic poetry, not only of the East, but of all lands, and strikingly illustrated in the familiar verse of Omar Khayyam:

> 'A Book of Verses underneath the Bough,
> A Jug of Wine, a Loaf of Bread—and Thou
> Beside me singing in the wilderness—
> Oh, Wilderness were Paradise enow.'

Rightly. R. V. margin gives 'in uprightness,' which probably expresses with greater clearness the idea of this last line. It is the utterance of the bride herself, who thus agrees with the high praise given to the bridegroom by her friends, and

5 I am black, but comely,
O ye daughters of Jerusalem,
As the tents of Kedar,

---

at the same time expresses her conviction that their love of him is pure, and their praise uttered from no unworthy motives.

5. I am black. The words here used by the bride of her own personal appearance refer to the darkening of her complexion by her exposure to the sun, and we are told that even now the Bedouin women thus contrast themselves with the women of the town. She is, however, conscious of her personal attractions, in all likelihood referring to her litheness of limb and well-knit figure, which find definite praise in a later stage of the poem (vii. 1–7).

daughters of Jerusalem. This title recurs frequently throughout the book, and it must be confessed that it is one of the phrases more easy of interpretation on the dramatic theory. The commentators who take this view regard it as descriptive of the king's harem. If the book is of northern origin, the question is at once asked, What are daughters of Jerusalem doing in that part of the country? If, however, we assume not only that the bride and bridegroom were regarded as king and queen for the week, but that sometimes a special name was given to the king, and he was called Solomon, with reference to the traditional splendour of that monarch, there need be little difficulty in assuming that the bride's companions were also named from the royal city. Another explanation is, however, possible, namely, that the girls in their festal attire were humorously regarded as 'daughters of Jerusalem', just as to-day the names of Paris or London might be applied to raiment and fashions of peculiar splendour. Another possibility is that local names may have been used in these marriage-songs according to the district of the country in which they were sung, and that we have here one edited by a southern writer which contains in the main southern names. In any case the words are not to be looked upon as defence against critics, but as humorous banter among friends.

tents of Kedar. The name Kedar is found in several places in the O. T., one of the most important references being Jer. xlix. 29, where a description of the Nomadic race is given. The real root of the word probably means 'powerful,' but has by a folk-etymology been connected with a Hebrew root which means 'dark' (cf. article 'Kedar' in *HDB.*). The tents were either made of black goatskin or of black woven material (cf. Doughty, *Arabia Deserta*, pp. 224 f.).

As the curtains of Solomon.
Look not upon me, because I am swarthy, 6
Because the sun hath [a] scorched me.
My mother's sons were incensed against me,
They made me keeper of the vineyards;

[a] Or, *looked upon*

---

curtains of Solomon. This second expression refers to the words 'I am comely,' as the former expression refers to the words 'I am black.' Eastern palaces were famous for their hangings in gorgeous colourings, and even the tents of those in high position were frequently made of rich material beautifully adorned. The comparison here is probably to some such pavilion designed as a pleasure-house or as accompanying the king in some royal progress through the country; the fame of its splendour may have been traditional.

6. Look not. The bride continues modestly to apologize for her sunburnt complexion, but the word she now uses is less severe than that of the former verse, and she begs her friends not to stare at her critically—for the sun has been to blame in the first instance, and in the second place those who gave her outside tasks to perform in tending the vineyards. The margin of the R.V. gives 'looked upon' as an alternative rendering for 'scorched,' but it must be noticed that the word is not the same in the original as that translated 'look upon' in the former line.

mother's sons. Surely too much has been made of this expression by many commentators. It is nothing but a poetical phrase for 'brothers,' and is too slight a basis to build up a theory as to the home life of the girl—the probable death of her father, and her consequent ill-usage at the hand of those who should have been her natural protectors.

keeper of the vineyards. The ordinary explanation given is that the girl had been put in charge of her brother's vineyard, and that when in the next line she speaks of not keeping her own vineyard, this is to be taken as a figurative reference to her personal appearance. But surely that is not only a strange figure, but a very abrupt transition. It seems much more probable that in both cases the word 'vineyard' is a figure, and is to be interpreted in the light of subsequent references in the poem (for example, iv. 12–15, vii. 6–8, 10–13, viii. 12). The anger of her brothers was probably shown in the attempt to keep her unmarried; and she here confesses that she had not obeyed their behest, but permitted love to find its inroad into the enclosure of her heart, and another was now lord of the vineyard she had

But mine own vineyard have I not kept.
7 Tell me, O thou whom my soul loveth,
Where thou feedest *thy flock*, where thou makest *it* to rest
at noon:
For why should I be as one that [a] is veiled
Beside the flocks of thy companions?

[a] Most ancient versions have, *wandereth.*

---

been directed to keep as her own. This also makes the transition to the next verse much more probable than on any other explanation, as it is another outburst of longing for her husband lover.

7. Tell me. This verse brings before us for the first time the pastoral imagery of which the poem is so full. This is a type of poetry that has been prevalent in many lands and at many periods. It very easily becomes artificial, and in the highest examples of it the artificial element is probably always present. Yet under this conventional form some of the finest poetry has been written (cf. the *Eclogues* of Virgil, the *Idylls* of Theocritus, the *Lycidas* of Milton, and the *Thyrsis* of Matthew Arnold). Under pastoral imagery, therefore, the bride now calls upon her bridegroom, begging him to make known to her the noontide resting-place of his flocks that they may spend in love-dalliance the hour of leisure (cf. the figure, Ps. xxiii. 1-3). This explanation avoids the extreme difficulties and improbabilities of the dramatic theory, where the maiden is supposed in an absent way to address her far-off lover, or as by Martineau, that he suddenly puts in an appearance here at the king's palace. Neither is Budde's idea that this particular section of the song refers to a pre-nuptial meeting any more probable.

one that is veiled. As the margin of the R. V. indicates, the translation 'wandereth' is much more probable, and is that adopted by many modern commentators, as the original word can very well bear that meaning with but the slightest change in its form. It is difficult to give to the rendering 'veiled' any appropriate sense. Some have considered it to be a complaint on her part that she might be mistaken for a woman of evil character—a class who, we learn from Gen. xxxviii. 15, were accustomed to go with their faces covered. Others take it to mean mourning, as women mourners were also veiled. The best sense, however, is undoubtedly that which pictures the girl as wandering disconsolately among alien flocks and strange shepherds while her heart longs for her own lover.

If thou know not, O thou fairest among women, 8
Go thy way forth by the footsteps of the flock,
And feed thy kids beside the shepherds' tents.

I have compared thee, O [a] my love, 9
[b] To a steed in Pharaoh's chariots.

---

[a] Or, *my friend* (and so throughout)
[b] Or, *To the steeds* Or, *To my steed*

---

8. This verse is no mocking gibe of palace women, but a chorus sung by her girl friends, advising her to go fearlessly forth to where the shepherds are, and lead her flock of kids to the pasture-place, where undoubtedly her own lover will soon find her. The fact that in this verse she is spoken of as a shepherdess is another argument against the literal interpretation of verse 6, which would describe her as a vine-dresser.

i. 9—ii. 7. This section consists of a dialogue between the bridegroom and the bride, in which, in alternate verses, the one praises the other, using many similes from nature; and in the last stanza the bride describes in luscious language the joy of her heart in the enjoyment of her husband's love, and ends with a refrain which recurs twice later in the poem, begging her friends not to interrupt her enjoyment.

To the dramatists this section appears to be the appeal of the king to the country maiden, who in turn sings the praise of her own lover, and modestly disclaims the king's flattery, while the closing words are addressed to the court ladies as an appeal not to force her into a hateful union.

9. love. The word thus rendered occurs very frequently throughout this poem, and only elsewhere in the O. T. in one place (Judges xi. 37), where it is used by the daughter of Jephtha of her girl friends. There can be little doubt, however, that it is to be taken in this poem as equivalent to lover, and Professor Harper compares the similar use of the word *ami* in French.

To a steed. As the form in the original is feminine, we might perhaps render here 'filly.' The comparison may not seem so complimentary to a Western as it did to an Eastern mind; but the beauty of the horse, especially when we remember that in all probability the extreme gracefulness of the Arab breed was in the mind of the writer, renders the comparison no unworthy one, and it is found in both Greek and Latin poets. Theocritus considered it no inadequate figure under which to set forth the beauty of the golden and rose-red Helen, while Horace compares Lyde to a three-year-old filly, sporting upon the wide plains, and shrinking from the touch of her would-be capturer

10 Thy cheeks are comely with plaits *of hair*,
Thy neck with strings of jewels.
11 We will make thee plaits of gold
With studs of silver.

(Theoc. *Idylls* xviii. 30; Hor. *Odes* iii. 11. 9). Another reading of the Hebrew gives the word as plural, but this rendering is not probable. The point of the comparison with the chariots of Pharaoh is in all probability because Egyptian horses were specially famous and valued; and the comparison may get its significance not only from the beauty and grace of the creature itself, but because of the magnificent trappings with which horses in a royal chariot were adorned. To the Oriental the ornaments of the bride were almost as praiseworthy as the beauty of the woman herself, and we find this reference not only in the immediately succeeding verse, but in other passages of the poem (cf. iv. 4, 9).

10. Thy cheeks are comely. The LXX renders, 'How comely are thy cheeks,' which may probably represent the correct reading. The description that follows continues the comparison with a horse and the chariots of Pharaoh, for, as we are told by Mr. Lane and others, the horses' heads in Egypt 'are adorned with silk tassels, and coins, or other ornaments, of silver' (*Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians*, p. 155).

plaits of hair. The A.V. renders, 'with rows of jewels,' and it seems doubtful which of the two renderings is correct. The R.V. is favoured by the fact that the second clause of the parallelism speaks of chains of gold, so that it would be reasonable to expect both parts of the adornment to be mentioned. The style of hair-dressing described by Mr. Lane reveals the hair as being divided into numerous plaits always of an uneven number. These are allowed to hang down the back, while to each braid of hair are added three black silk cords with little gold and silver ornaments attached to them. The ornaments on each string are so placed as not to correspond exactly with those on the others. At the extreme end of each cord is generally suspended a gold coin, or sometimes a pear-shaped ornament of flat gold, or one of filigree work, or a tassel of pearls—so that a moderate head-dress may have anything from 600 to 1,000 ornaments in its composition. We can thus see how appropriate is the comparison to the adornment of the horse's mane.

Thy neck. Here the description turns to the necklace. These also consist of various forms in modern Egyptian dress, and often contain jewels of great value (cf. Lane, pp. 567–9).

11. plaits of gold. This expression probably means strings of gold beads, each one of which is decorated with little points

While the king sat at his table, 12
My spikenard sent forth its fragrance.
My beloved is unto me *as* a [a] bundle of myrrh, 13
That lieth betwixt my breasts.
My beloved is unto me *as* cluster of [b] henna-flowers 14

[a] Or, *bag* [b] Heb. *copher.*

---

of silver, or tiny silver pendants are described as hanging from the gold chain. The verse is possibly to be attributed to the bride's companions.

12. While the king, &c. On the theory here taken of the poem, these words refer to the wedding-feast, when the bride was perfumed with the richest and rarest odours. The spikenard was one of the most highly prized of these, being the product of an Indian plant (cf. John xii. 3). Those who take the dramatic interpretation generally regard the reference as a figurative one, and consider the maiden to be saying here that only in the absence of Solomon can the deepest feelings of her heart find the liberty of expression. This seems altogether forced and unnatural.

13. My beloved. The reference to the spikenard suggests to her a new figure. It is not so much the rich fragrance upon her own body and raiment that is precious, but more valued and sweeter still than any perfume is the bridegroom himself; and she compares him, with the idea doubtless of the intimacy of contact and the privacy of possession, to the bag or little filigree case of perfume, which was worn suspended from the neck, and hung close to her bosom between her breasts. The myrrh was valued, not only for its aromatic properties, but also as a disinfectant, and so was worn night and day. It had also the property of reinvigorating and refreshing the fainting, and so is more appropriate as a figure of the sustaining presence of her beloved.

14. a cluster of henna-flowers. This plant was a low tree or shrub whose fragrant flowers grow in large, whitish clusters, not unlike a bunch of grapes. From the plant is extracted the dye from which the Eastern women dye their hands and feet, as described in the following passage by Mr. Lane. The women 'stain certain parts of their hands and feet with the leaves of the henna-tree, which impart a yellowish red or deep orange colour. Many thus dye only the nails of the fingers and toes; others extend the dye as high as the first joint of each finger and toe; some also make a stripe along the next row of joints; and there are several other fanciful modes of applying the henna; but the most common practice is to dye the tips of the fingers and toes as high as the first joint, and the whole of the inside of the hand

In the vineyards of En-gedi.

15 Behold, thou art fair, my love; behold, thou art fair;
[a] Thine eyes are *as* doves.

16 Behold, thou art fair, my beloved, yea, pleasant:
Also our couch is green.

[a] Or, *Thou hast doves' eyes*

---

and the sole of the foot.' When the dye has been applied the hand is tightly bound with linen during the night. The colour remains for about a fortnight or three weeks, and, when skilfully applied, renders both nails and hands more delicate in appearance. Mr. Lane also tells us that there prevails a habit of making indelible tatoo marks between the breasts. If this custom prevailed in Palestine, it is just possible that the mention of the myrrh as lying close to these marks upon her bosom may have suggested the further figure of the henna-flower, its fragrance, and its employment for adornment, while the lasting nature of the beauty it imparted makes it a still more fitting figure of love.

En-gedi. We are told that the henna-flower is to-day found in Palestine only at En-gedi. In old days this place was famous for its fertility and vineyards.

15. Behold, thou art fair. Here the bridegroom answers in affectionate praise the words of the bride. The gentle tenderness, and perhaps innocence, of the eyes of the dove are attributed to her; but it is to be remembered that the dove has always been one of the adjuncts of love. It was the bird of Venus, and we shall often find it referred to in the course of the poem. The verse has been thought by some commentators to be too long, and for rhythmic reasons they have suggested cutting out the recurrence of the opening words; but, of course, there is no textual authority for such a course.

16. Behold, thou art fair. In this case the gender of the pronouns shows that the bride is replying to her bridegroom[1], but the word translated pleasant is stronger than this rendering suggests, and might better be translated 'ravishing.'

our couch is green. The words are difficult to interpret because they seem to come so abruptly into the context, and hence certain editors have attempted emendations in the Hebrew text; but none of them are satisfactory. To give a suitable meaning to the words as they stand is not at all an easy task. It is possible to suppose with many that the girl is thinking of former wanderings among the shady recesses of the forest, and of lover's talks on grassy banks; but all this appears much too modern and

---

[1] See, however, Introduction, p. 5.

The beams of our [a] house are [b] cedars, 17
And our rafters are [c] firs.
I am a [d] rose of [e] Sharon, 2
A lily of the valleys.

[a] Or, *houses* [b] Or, *of cedar . . . of fir* [c] Or, *cypresses*
[d] Heb. *habazzeleth*, the autumn crocus.
[e] Or, *the plain*

Western to suit the circumstances. If, on the other hand, we understand it to refer to the nuptial chamber in her new home, it is not easy to explain the epithet 'green.' Siegfried, indeed, suggests that the reference is to the decoration of the marriage couch with greenery and aromatic herbs, but the only passage in support that he can adduce is Prov. vii. 17, which is certainly not appropriate.

17. The beams of our house. Here the first question is whether these words are on the lips of the bride or bridegroom. They may be the answer of the latter as further descriptive of the bridal chamber, and if they are thought too splendid for a literal description of the humble dwelling of a peasant, we must remember the whole circumstances of the occasion, and on his lips the words may be glorified by love, which, with its magic, turns the cottage into a palace. On the other hand, both this verse and the next may be a continuation of the bride's speech. Some see in the words a further reference to the forest, and regard them literally as descriptive of its glades.

ii. **1. a rose of Sharon.** These well-known words are made use of by the bride in which to compare herself to the flowers of her own meadows. The first is generally taken to be the meadow saffron, a flower not unlike a crocus, though others, following the rendering of the Jewish paraphrase, regard it as the 'narcissus,' a flower which, we are told, is the special favourite with the natives. The sweetness of the scent may render it here the more appropriate figure. The 'lily' is by the majority of commentators regarded as the 'scarlet anemone,' as the name, still given to it by the Arabs, is derived from the root of the word here used in the original. The word must (cf. v. 13) denote a red flower, for there the comparison is descriptive of the colour of the lips. These comparisons do not necessarily imply that the bride dwells upon her humility and insignificance. It rather appears that the references are to her beauty and winsomeness. One argument in favour of interpreting the preceding verses as referring to outdoor lovers' meetings in the forest is this continuation of the thought of the scenery of the outer world in the figures here employed.

2 As a lily among thorns,
So is my love among the daughters.

3 As the apple tree among the trees of the wood,
So is my beloved among the sons.
[a] I sat down under his shadow with great delight,
And his fruit was sweet to my taste.
4 He brought me to the [b] banqueting house,

[a] Heb. *I delighted and sat down &c.* [b] Heb. *house of wine.*

---

2. a lily among thorns. The bridegroom catches up her own language and, continuing her metaphor, applies it in a manner that is not complimentary to her companions, whom he compares to thorns. The word used for thorns is found again in Prov. xxvi. 9, which see.

3. as the apple tree. The bride here adopts the same form of language as the bridegroom has just used, and describes him as excelling his companions as the apple-tree excels the other trees. The poetical beauty of the imagery is found in the fact that she does not use quite the same type of expression as he has done, and her comparison implies nothing that is directly derogatory to those whom it sets in opposition to her beloved. The rendering 'apple-tree' is not quite certain, though a very large number of commentators favour it. Other suggestions are citron, orange, or quince, and the choice lies between the latter and the apple. The chief difficulty about accepting the 'apple-tree' as the proper translation is that the apple does not flourish in Palestine, and the few specimens that are known are of poor quality. On the other hand, the quince flourishes, and has always done so, for there are many references to it in ancient writers. It is objected to the quince that no one can call its fruit 'sweet.' In its natural condition this is true, but it is generally eaten in a prepared form, which is said to be extremely delicious. Further, the fragrance of the quince is much more marked than that of the apple, and would thus fit in well with the reference in verse 5. Again, the quince was associated with marriage rites, and would probably have appropriate love-associations attached to it (see the article 'Apple' in *HBD.* and *Enc. Bibl.*). The expansion of the metaphor in the remainder of the verse is descriptive of the fullness of the joy she had experienced in realizing all the proofs of his love.

4. banqueting house. More literally and appropriately, as in the margin, 'house of wine,' though there are some who

And his banner over me was love.
Stay ye me with [a] raisins, comfort me with apples: 5

[a] Heb. *cakes of raisins.*

---

regard the Hebrew original as a proper name, Beth-hayyayin (cf. Bethel, Bethlehem, &c.), as designating the village in which the bridegroom's home stood. This is improbable, as it would make the reference much too special. The 'house of wine' is probably the inn where travellers find refreshment, and is here referred by a metaphor to the chamber of love. And in Omar we find the reference to 'this batter'd Caravanserai of life' and to 'the wine or life,' where here we have the 'wine of love.'

banner. The meaning of the word is not easy to settle. In other places it is translated 'standard,' but that rendering is disputed by some scholars, who would give it the meaning of 'a company of troops.' The latter significance seems, of course, quite unappropriate. The main difficulty is to find a good sense for the word 'banner' in this connexion. It is easy enough to speak of the banner of love floating over her. It is very questionable whether the metaphor thus suggested has any proper basis in a probable reconstruction of the scene. We are told that it was a practice in Arabia for the wine-seller to fly a flag outside his shop so long as he had wine to sell, and there may be some connexion between that practice and the words here used. They would then signify that the wine of love was for her a permanent possession.

5. raisins. The word is better rendered as in the marg. and in Hosea iii. 1, 'cakes of raisins.' It is well known how sustaining a food the raisin is, and it is a favourite and common one in the East. As generally interpreted, there are several references to these raisin-cakes in the O.T. (see 2 Sam. vi. 19; Isa. xvi. 7, in addition to the passage quoted above). But this meaning has been disputed, and it is said that in all cases the reference is to a cake of flour kneaded together with grape-juice, which in the process of baking would ferment and serve as leaven. It is considered also that this would give the cake a peculiar quality as a restorative, which is what is wanted here. That these cakes were, according to Jer. vii. 18 and xliv. 19, offered to a divinity who was the goddess of love, may throw additional light on the significance of the word in this passage. Professor Cheyne, however (*Enc. Bibl.*, col. 1,569), regards the original word here as wrongly given in the ordinary text, and, by a slight change, alters it to the word that occurs in verse 1, and means 'lilies.' On this understanding the reference would be throughout to her desire for some fragrant and pungent perfume to prevent her

For I am sick of love.
6 [a] His left hand *is* under my head,
And his right hand doth embrace me.

7 I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem,
By the [b] roes, and by the hinds of the field,
That ye stir not up, nor awaken love,
Until it please.

8 The voice of my beloved! behold, he cometh,

---

[a] Or, Let *his left hand* be *&c.* [b] Or, *gazelles*

---

from fainting, a meaning that is sometimes given to the passage as it stands, seeing that the Easterns are in the habit of smelling fruit for that purpose. The emendation, however, seems unnecessary.

sick of love. These words seem to refer to an excess of love, which has brought her almost to the point of fainting. The older commentators regarded it as an expression of the longing for love unsatisfied, as she hungered for her absent lover; but, even on the interpretation here accepted, may not this meaning be appropriate? The joys she has just described cause her suddenly to long for their renewal, and in an outburst of desire she seeks for refreshment. It is to be confessed, however, that the words of the next verse militate against such a suggestion.

6. His left hand. Probably the reading of the margin, 'Let his left hand, &c.,' is preferable. The word rendered 'embrace' is found again in viii. 3, and Prov. v. 20; Eccles. iii. 5.

7. I adjure you. This is obviously an address to her companions, bidding them leave love its liberty; and the force of the adjuration by the wild creatures of the field is not only appropriate because of their freedom, but because of their beauty and shyness, and because they are both frequently employed in Eastern poetry as typical of womanly beauty. It is a refrain that occurs on two other occasions in the poem: see iii. 5 and viii. 4.

ii. 8—iii. 5. This section consists of a song sung by the bride, and contains a report of an exquisite love-song addressed to her by the bridegroom. She then turns to him (verse 17) in direct address, but follows this with the poetical record of a dream, in which she has sought and found him in the streets of the city, and concludes with the same refrain with which the last song closed.

Leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills.
My beloved is like a [a] roe or a young hart: 9
Behold, he standeth behind our wall,
He looketh in at the windows,
He [b] sheweth himself through the lattice.
My beloved spake, and said unto me, 10
Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away.
For, lo, the winter is past, 11

[a] Or, *gazelle* [b] Or, *glanceth through*

Verse 15 creates a difficulty, as it does not seem quite easy to fit it into her song. If it is not to be taken as the words of the bride it is then a chorus verse. The dramatic interpreters break the section up into several parts, but are not all in agreement as to the persons to whom these are to be assigned.

8. The voice of my beloved. This would be better rendered, 'Hark! my beloved!' The verse is a jubilant outcry of greeting, as she sees in imagination her young shepherd eagerly hastening to meet her.

9. like a roe. Several commentators consider these words out of place here, and suppose they have been introduced from verse 17 below. Here the LXX not only reads the words, but adds the conclusion of verse 17 as well. It is not possible definitely to decide the question, but internal evidence seems against the presence of the words here. The remaining words of the verse draw a pretty picture of the lover shyly approaching the home of the maiden, and of their intercourse of loving glances through the cottage-windows. In modern literature there is a charming parallel in Frenssen's *Holy Land*; and Professor Harper happily quotes Tennyson's lines:

> 'And all my heart went out to meet him
> Coming, ere he came.'

10. My beloved spake. She turns now to relate a love-song that her lover has sung to her, and it deals with the subject that is ever present in love-songs, the poetry of the spring, 'When a young man's fancy lightly turns to thoughts of love.' It begins with an invitation to come out and view the beauty of the spring of Palestine, and to listen to the call of flower and bird and tree that bid the lovers awake to love, as Nature round about them is already doing.

11. winter. This should more accurately be the 'time of the rain,' but the parallel in the second clause of the verse so explains

The rain is over and gone;
12 The flowers appear on the earth;
The time of the [a] singing *of birds* is come,
And the voice of the turtle is heard in our land;
13 The fig tree ripeneth her green figs,

[a] Or, *pruning* of vines

---

it. Since a name for the season must stand here winter is our only appropriate equivalent. What is in strictness meant is *geshem*, the heavy winter rain; but for six weeks longer the *malkôsh* or *latter* rain has still to fall (see *Exp. Times*, vi. 390).

12. The flowers appear. All travellers tell us of the exquisite beauty of the sudden rush of flowers in Palestine at the opening of spring.

the singing. This meaning of the word is doubtful. The LXX and many ancient versions translate 'pruning,' and, as the italics show, there is no equivalent for 'of birds' in Hebrew, and the word here employed is never elsewhere used of the voice of birds, but always of human song. The temptation to render 'singing' probably comes from the supposed parallelism in the next clause, but on the whole 'pruning' seems preferable, as, with the exception of the cooing of the dove, all the other references in the passage are to plant life. The reference to pruning at this season is also an accurate one, for a species of pruning takes place at this period of vine-culture.

the voice of the turtle. The dove is another herald of spring, just as the cuckoo is so regarded among ourselves (cf. Jer. viii. 7). The dove has been an attribute of love, and in this sense is particularly appropriate in such a connexion. Tennyson has also used it in another way in the passage above referred to, when he says, 'In the spring a livelier iris changes on the burnished dove.' Some modern commentators cut out the words 'in our land' as a gloss[1]. There is no external evidence for this, but the words seem somewhat redundant.

13. ripeneth. The word so rendered creates considerable difficulty to scholars because of the uncertainty of its meaning. It is only used in one other passage in the O. T., Gen. l. 2, 26, where it means 'embalm.' The kindred root in Arabic and other Semitic languages suggest that this usage arises from the employment of spices in that process, and so some would render it here 'spiceth' instead of 'ripeneth.' Others suggest 'reddeneth,' because the word has also that meaning in Arabic. In any case,

---

[1] i. e. explanatory note by a copyist.

And the vines are in blossom,
They give forth their fragrance.
Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away.
O my dove, that art in the clefts of the rock, in the covert 14
of the steep place,
Let me see thy countenance, let me hear thy voice;
For sweet is thy voice, and thy countenance is comely.
Take us the foxes, the little foxes, that spoil the vineyards; 15

whatever the original meaning be, the English version represents the process described, and here again discussion arises as to what sort of figs were meant. It was too early for the fresh figs to ripen, but it is said that figs almost always persist on the trees in an unripe state during the winter months, and that when spring comes these rapidly ripen (cf. Matt. xxi. 19, and for the fig-tree as a sign of spring, cf. Matt. xxiv. 32).

in blossom. The word so rendered occurs only here, and its meaning is very uncertain, but probably the English represents it with sufficient accuracy.

fragrance. The delicate fragrance of the blossoming vines is a noticeable feature in all vineyards. The words that close the verse are a repetition of those in verse 10, and probably mark a section of the song.

14. O my dove. Here the lover turns to his beloved with endearing language, comparing her to the rock-doves and her retreat within the house to their hiding themselves in the inaccessible places of the rocks.

countenance. Probably better rendered 'figure.'

15. Take us the foxes. This verse has occasioned much difficulty to interpreters. The first question to decide is to whom to assign the verse. Is it a continuation of the bridegroom's song? If so, then the connexion is not easy to make out. The transition is extremely abrupt from the praise of his beloved to this reference to the foxes. If not his, it may either be attributed to the bride herself, and so some regard it, with the idea that she is here quoting a verse of a popular vineyard song, which is supposed to be taken in an allegorical sense, as in i. 6, with reference to her love; but this meaning seems also forced and unnatural. The only remaining possibility is to regard the words as a chorus sung by the companions of bride or bridegroom[1]. The

---

[1] Foxes or jackals (the word in the original means either) are very fond of grapes, and do much damage in the vineyards (cf. Aesop's Fables, and Theoc. v. 112).

For our vineyards are in blossom.
16 My beloved is mine, and I am his:
He feedeth *his flock* among the lilies.
17 [a] Until the day [b] be cool, and the shadows flee away,
Turn, my beloved, and be thou like a [c] roe or a young hart

[a] Or *When the day is cool* [b] Or, *break* Heb. *breathe*
[c] Or, *gazelle*

---

words may thus be, as has been suggested, a refrain from a popular folk-song, but it is questionable whether even then the literal meaning is to be taken. Many modern commentators regard the words as belonging to a jocular song, with a *double entendre*, warning her against the havoc that love may play in the vineyard of her own heart.

16. My beloved. Here we return to the direct address of the bride to her bridegroom, but its purport is not clear, and many modern interpreters seem correct in regarding the language, not only as highly figurative, but as euphemistically hiding ideas that modern Western taste would not tolerate.

He feedeth. The word thus rendered may also mean 'the shepherd,' but the sense would not be clear, unless it were to paint some idyllic pastoral scene. The R. V. inserts 'his flock,' but without warrant in the Hebrew; so that the words probably mean 'he feedeth among the lilies,' a phrase that is impossible to interpret literally. It is very probable that both this and the phrases of the following verse describe the kiss and embrace of the lovers.

17. Until the day be cool. Few words are more familiar than the A. V. rendering of this passage, 'Until the day break and the shadows flee away,' but unfortunately not only the association but the meaning of the words is almost certainly wrong. As the R. V. margin indicates, the word rendered 'be cool' means literally 'breathe or blow,' as in Gen. iii. 8, where the words rendered 'in the cool of the day' mean literally 'in the blowing or wind of the day,' and, of course, refer not to sunrise but to sunset. Here, therefore, the meaning seems to be the same, and the reference to the departure of the shadows is not to the darkness of night vanishing before the dawn, but to the onrush of the dark, when there are no longer any shadows, because all is darkness (cf. Coleridge in *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, 'At one stride comes the dark'). Instead of 'until' we should probably translate 'when,' so that the verse is a request for her lover to come to her at eventide. The comparison to the 'roe' and the 'young hart,' which again occurs

Upon the [a] mountains of [b] Bether.
By night on my bed I sought him whom my soul loveth : 3
I sought him, but I found him not.
I said, I will rise now, and go about the city, 2
In the streets and in the broad ways,
I will seek him whom my soul loveth :

[a] Or, *mountains of separation*
[b] Perhaps, the spice *malobathron.*

---

here is obviously to their swiftness, and suggest her eagerness for her lover's advent. She can certainly not mean 'flee swiftly away,' as Prof. Harper, by the exigencies of his dramatic theory, is compelled to translate.

mountains of Bether. Here is another difficult phrase, and the word given in the R. V. as a proper name does not, thus read, give any illumination. Some have identified it with a place near Jerusalem (cf. *HBD.*, 'Bether'), but the identification seems very improbable. As the margin shows, the word can be rendered 'separation,' and it is thus that many of the old versions translate it. It is the word employed (Gen. xv. 10) of Abraham's cutting the animals in twain on the occasion of the Lord's covenant with him ; but even so the renderings vary between 'cleft mountains,' that is, mountains separated by ravines, and mountains which themselves separate, the 'over the hills and far away' idea of the Scotch love-song, which might be very appropriate here. Others regard it as a contracted form of the word *malabathron*, which in Greek and Latin is designated an aromatic plant. In support of this idea, compare iv. 6, where the fragrance of the hills is definitely referred to ; and if the words are figuratively applicable to the person of the bride, the fragrance of the perfumes which she had used would suggest the term. Cheyne, by a slight alteration of the Hebrew word, renders 'cypresses,' regarding it as an appropriate description of Lebanon.

iii. **1.** The verses which follow, though still attributed to the bride, probably mark another song distinct from the one just concluded, a song which recounts a dream.

By night. This may better be rendered 'night after night,' denoting her constant anxiety and longing for her lover. Of course, the dream must be a reminiscence of the days before the wedding.

2. city. Not at all necessarily Jerusalem.

broad ways. Rather the open spaces where a number of roads meet.

I sought him, but I found him not.
3 The watchmen that go about the city found me:
To whom I said, Saw ye him whom my soul loveth?
4 It was but a little that I passed from them,
When I found him whom my soul loveth:
I held him, and would not let him go,
Until I had brought him into my mother's house,
And into the chamber of her that conceived me.

5 [a] I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem,
By the roes, and by the hinds of the field,
That ye stir not up, nor awaken love,
Until it please.

6 Who is this that cometh up out of the wilderness like pillars of smoke,

[a] See ch. ii. 7.

---

but I found him not. Note the pathos of this recurrent phrase.

4. The exultant joy of this verse contrasts beautifully with the pathos of the former verses, and the exquisite little lyric closes (verse 5) with the words we have already found in the former chapter.

Verses 6-11. The following song is probably to be attributed to a male chorus, and may be a representative of the more martial songs which Wetzstein describes. The main difficulty is as to whether it describes the glory of the historic Solomon or whether the words are to be referred to the peasant bridegroom. Probably the traditional glory of the great king had set a model for the sort of language here employed. The verses are an imaginary account of a royal progress in which the king is accompanied by his troops and is carried in a magnificent palanquin described in detail, and the song closes with a summons to the maidens to go out to meet the procession.

6. Who is this? It should be rather, 'What is this?' The word is feminine in the original, a usage which is often employed in place of the neuter; but here the pronoun clearly refers to the word rendered 'litter' in verse 7, which is feminine.

pillars of smoke. This is taken by the majority of com-

Perfumed with myrrh and frankincense,
With all powders of the merchant?
Behold, it is the litter of Solomon; 7
Threescore mighty men are about it,
Of the mighty men of Israel.
They all handle the sword, *and* are expert in war: 8
Every man hath his sword upon his thigh,
Because of fear in the night.
King Solomon made himself a [a] palanquin 9
Of the wood of Lebanon.
He made the pillars thereof of silver, 10
The bottom thereof of gold, the seat of it of purple,

[a] Or, *car of state*

---

mentators to apply to clouds of smoke from the incense which is being burned in honour of the royal personage; but may it not rather apply to the dust of the cavalcade? The wilderness is, of course, not the literal desert, but out of the lonely and remote places the company is seen drawing near to human habitation (cf. Mark i. 35, &c.).

Perfumed. This word seems to refer to the burning of perfumes, and the words descriptive of these include all the richest of such preparations as the East could produce.

7. mighty men. For this term see 2 Sam. xxiii. 8, &c.

8. fear in the night. The main work of these bodyguards was to watch over the king in the darkness, to prevent there being fear in the night.

9. Some consider that the description here given of Solomon's litter is to be attributed to another singer, but that is quite unnecessary. The word rendered palanquin is a different one from that used in verse 7, and from its form seems to have been borrowed from Greek.

wood of Lebanon. Certainly the richly scented and much prized cedar.

10. pillars. These are the roof-supports of the canopy above the palanquin.

bottom. The word more probably denotes the 'back of the seat,' and this meaning is supported by the Greek and Latin versions.

seat. This, of course, refers to the cushions of the palanquin being upholstered in dark purple cloth or silk.

The midst thereof being [a] paved with love,
From the daughters of Jerusalem.
11 Go forth, O ye daughters of Zion, and behold king Solomon,
With the crown wherewith his mother hath crowned him in the day of his espousals,
And in the day of the gladness of his heart.

4 Behold, thou art fair, my love; behold, thou art fair;

[a] Or, *inlaid*

---

paved with love. As the margin suggests, 'paved' is more correctly rendered 'inlaid'; but what can 'inlaid with love' mean? Interpreters have been driven to explain it as meaning that the palanquin was thus decorated as a token of affection on the part of the daughters of Jerusalem; but such an interpretation is not easily got out of the Hebrew, if, indeed, it is at all possible. The only other conclusion is that there is some corruption in the text. The first indication of this is that the words 'daughters of Zion,' which occur immediately afterwards, are not found in the LXX, which suggests that they may be misplaced, and should only occur once, namely, in the following verse. Again, a very slight alteration of two letters in the original turns the word translated 'love' into the word that means 'ebony,' so that the whole phrase can be rendered 'the seat is upholstered with purple, and inlaid with ebony,' a perfectly intelligible and probable rendering.

11. Go forth. This verse supports Haupt's theory that this song is one sung by the bride's companions as they go forth to meet the bridal procession. Delitzsch quotes Jewish authority for the statement that the custom of the bridegroom's wearing a crown was abolished after the wars under Vespasian. There may be a reference to the practice in Isa. lxi. 10, where the word rendered 'garland' in our version is probably the bridal crown. On the theory here taken of the book, there is, of course, no reference to the historical Solomon.

iv. i—v. 1. This whole section is taken up with the praise of the personal beauty and allurements of the bride, and many parallels to such lyrics are found in Egyptian and Aramaic poetry, and Wetzstein quotes a *wasf*, which has many parallels to these passages in the Song of Songs. The whole section may consist of one song, or, as is more probable, a second song begins at

[a] Thine eyes are *as* doves behind thy [b] veil:
Thy hair is as a flock of goats,
That [c] lie along the side of mount Gilead.
Thy teeth are like a flock *of ewes* that are *newly* shorn, 2

[a] Or, *Thou hast doves' eyes* [b] Or, *locks*
[c] Or, *appear on mount Gilead*

---

iv. 8, but it is not likely that iv. 16 and v. 1 constitute separate sections. The first eight verses consist of elaborate praise in detail of her personal beauty, using in many cases comparisons that may seem far-fetched to Western readers, but were familiar and highly prized by Orientals. From verse 8 onwards the singer makes a personal appeal to the bride that she should yield to his entreaties, continues with further figurative language descriptive of her charms, and concludes with a triumphant statement of the attaining of his heart's desire.

1. behind thy veil. The word rendered 'veil' has also been understood as locks of hair. It seems difficult to understand how the eyes could be spoken of as being behind the hair. On the other hand, the Eastern veil, as Mr. Lane shows, may be used in a most coquettish manner. Seeing that it conceals all the features except the eyes, these latter can with skill be displayed to the best advantage.

flock of goats. The blackness of goats' hair has already been referred to in i. 5, and that is the point of the comparison here, though Benzinger understands it as 'dirty brown,' which seems improbable, since black hair was so much admired in the East (cf. the *wasf* above referred to): 'Her hair like the black night, her black hair like the seven nights, the like are not in the whole year.' A further point in the comparison appears to be given by the mention of the goats as being on Mount Gilead. The word descriptive of them suggests the goats as lying on the slopes of the hill, and perhaps raising their heads when disturbed, and thus heightens the picture of the masses of hair clustering on the sides of the head. The word translated 'lie along' has also been rendered 'swarm forth from,' but this meaning is not supported in Brown's *Lexicon*.

Gilead. The name probably covers the whole mountain-range lying east of the Jordan, between the north end of the Dead Sea and the south end of the Lake of Galilee, though sometimes it was extended further both north and south. The mountains rise to between 3,000 and 4,000 feet from the Jordan valley, and the district is rich in streams, forests, and gentle slopes of pasture-land.

2. flock of ewes. The simile may seem quaint, but is not

Which are come up from the washing;
[a] Whereof every one hath twins,
And none is bereaved among them.
3 Thy lips are like a thread of scarlet,
And thy [b] mouth is comely:
Thy temples are like a piece of a pomegranate
Behind thy [c] veil.

[a] Or, *Which are all of them in pairs* [b] Or, *speech* [c] Or, *locks*

---

without its beauty. The brilliant whiteness of the newly-shorn sheep in the green pasture-land suggests in this pastoral poetry the simile. The great Scottish lyric poet, Burns, has not forgotten to use it:

> 'Her teeth are like a flock of sheep,
> With fleeces newly washen clean,
> That slowly mount the rising steep;
> And she's twa glancin', sparklin' een.'

The difficulty of the metaphor consists in the reference to the twins. If the rendering in the text be taken, then the only possible meaning is that as the bearing of twins is a sign of healthy ewes, so the teeth are here spoken of as in perfect condition; but more probably the marginal rendering, 'all of them in pairs,' which is a meaning the word bears in late Hebrew, is admissible here, and thus the reference will be to the teeth in the upper and under rows perfectly matching one another.

3. mouth. The word is a very unusual one, and from its root rather suggests 'speech'; and that this is a possible meaning may be seen from quoting other two lines of the *wasf*:

> 'Her mouth is a little crystal ring,
> And her teeth rows of pearls,
> And her tongue scatters pearls;
> And, ah, me, how beautiful her lips!'

pomegranate. The force of the comparison here lies in the colour of the pomegranate, but interpreters are divided in their opinion as to whether the reference is to the outside or to the inside of the fruit. In the former case the glossy and polished external surface would be used as a figure for the skin; in the latter the mingling of the red and yellow to the healthy glow of the skin.

veil. Here, as appears from the margin, the original word

Thy neck is like the tower of David builded [a] for an 4
armoury,
Whereon there hang a thousand bucklers,
All the shields of the mighty men.
Thy two breasts are like two fawns that are twins of a [b] roe, 5

[a] Or, *with turrets* [b] Or, *gazelle*

---

may refer to either the veil or locks of hair. In this case the latter meaning seems preferable.

4. neck. The points of beauty in a woman's neck are those of gracefulness combined with strength displayed in the firm and easy poise of the head. This is well suggested by the tower upon the city wall. Unfortunately, however, some of the details of the comparison cause great uncertainty. Cf. vii. 4 and note.

armoury. The word in the original here is a tremendous riddle to Hebrew scholars. From its root it appears to mean 'fatal things,' and thus 'weapons.' By a not uncommon transference of meaning it may signify a plâce where weapons are stored, hence an 'armoury.' The point of the comparison is between the walls glistening with their trophies of arms and the neck of the bride covered with necklaces of gold and silver ornaments. Prof. Cheyne, by an alteration in the Hebrew word, gives it the meaning 'shield,' and supposes the historical reference to be to the 'house of the forest of Lebanon' described in 1 Kings x. 14-17, where Solomon hung the targets and shields of gold. Cheyne also refers to Ezek. xxvii. 11, where we read, in the description of Tyre, that the soldiers 'hanged their shields upon thy walls round about; they have perfected thy beauty.' This latter illustration seems a very appropriate one. Further, the LXX understands the word as a proper name, Thalpioth. This is by some identified with a village near Damascus, and the words are taken to mean so built as to look toward Thalpioth, that is, as identified with vii. 4. Others, again, consider the LXX to be at fault, and that the word here represents the Greek word *telopos*, which they take to be a borrowed word, meaning 'far-looking,' i. e. from which a wide view is to be obtained.

shields. This is the meaning most generally given to the word, but it may also mean 'quivers,' or 'armour,' and the latter is preferred by some scholars (cf. *Exp. Times*, vol. x, p. 43). No change seems necessary.

5. breasts. The beauty here praised is obviously the perfect symmetry of the breasts, which suggests the tender and graceful forms of the gazelle wandering among the brilliant scarlet blossoms.

Which feed among the lilies.
6 [a] Until the day be cool, and the shadows flee away,
I will get me to the mountain of myrrh,
And to the hill of frankincense.
7 Thou art all fair, my love;
And there is no spot in thee.
8 Come with me from Lebanon, *my* bride,

[a] See ch. ii. 17.

The contrast suggested by the further descriptive line is possibly that of the rich tawny colour of the skin either shining through a diaphanous robe (cf. chap. vii) or displayed against one of thicker texture. Some scholars excise the words 'which feed among the lilies,' as being copied from ii. 16.

Interesting examples of kindred similes are to be found in Irish songs given in the collection known as *Songs of Connacht*:

'Her two breasts—round, fine,
Shapen, handsome, blossomy,
As it were snow that would be thrown on mountains.'

Again:

'Two breasts, bright like the blossom of the bushes,
And her neck like the swan on a March day.'

And, lastly:

'Her breast like a dove,
Or the foam in the cove.'

6. mountain of myrrh. By a slight alteration in the original Cheyne here understands proper names, reading 'mountain of Hermon and hill of Lebanon.' The change is possible, but unlikely and unnecessary, as we have already had a reference (ii. 7) to fragrant mountain slopes, and such similes recur. It is not at all likely that the language in this verse is to be taken literally, as the change would be too abrupt to be probable. Why should he, after such a description of the bride's charms, the perfection of which is summed up in verse 7, here say that because of her beauty he is going to leave her. The words are, after the manner of Oriental poetry, to be taken as referring to his determination to enjoy the sweets of love in her company.

8. Come with me. These words indicate either a distinct break in the sentence or the beginning of a new song, probably the

With me from Lebanon:
[a] Look from the top of Amana,
From the top of Senir and Hermon,
From the lions' dens,
From the mountains of the leopards.
Thou hast [b] ravished my heart, my sister, *my* bride; 9
Thou hast [b] ravished my heart with [c] one of thine eyes,

[a] Or, *Go* [b] Or, *given me courage*
[c] Or, *one* look *from thine eyes*

---

latter. It possibly indicates the wooing of a mountain maiden. Compare the words of the Gaelic song:

> 'And when with blossoms laden,
> Sweet summer comes again,
> I'll fetch my nut-brown maiden
> Down from her highland glen.'

There may be the further idea that in departing with him, while she might naturally shrink from the change to a lowland country, she would at least be in surroundings of greater safety.

Look. More likely 'depart.'

Amana. The Hebrew margin gives the alternative form Abana (cf. 2 Kings v. 12, where the reverse is true). Probably the form Amana is correct in both places. The name may designate both the stream, which is proverbial for its clearness and purity, and the mountain whence it flows. The latter is part of the range of the Antilibanus (cf. *Enc. Bibl.* under the names). It is this passage that suggested Burne Jones's fine picture, *Sponsa di Libano*, in the Liverpool Gallery.

9. Thou hast ravished. This is undoubtedly the correct meaning; compare an Egyptian love-song given by Lane, p. 379:

> 'Every night long my moaning ceaseth not
> For a solitary gazelle that hath taken away my soul.'

And, again, p. 376:

> 'The perfect in attributes hath involved me in trouble,
> And the black eyes have overthrown me.'

sister. A common practice among lovers in the East is to call each other by the names 'brother' and 'sister' (cf. viii. 1). Many illustrations are found of the practice in Egyptian and Aramaic love lyrics.

one of thine eyes. Probably 'one glance of thine eyes.'

With one chain of thy neck.
10 How fair is thy love, my sister, *my* bride!
How much better is thy love than wine!
And the smell of thine ointments than all manner of spices!
11 Thy lips, O *my* bride, [a] drop *as* the honeycomb:
Honey and milk are under thy tongue;
And the smell of thy garments is like the smell of Lebanon.
12 A garden [b] shut up is my sister, *my* bride;
A [c] spring shut up, a fountain sealed.
13 Thy shoots are [d] an orchard of pomegranates, with precious fruits;

[a] Or, *drop honey* [b] Heb. *barred.*
[c] Or, according to many ancient authorities, *garden*
[d] Or, *a paradise*

Compare the *wasf*, already quoted: 'The witchery of her eyes makes me groan.'

chain. The reference here is almost certainly to the bewitching beauty of her jewellery (cf. i. 10).

11. There are plays upon words in the original in this verse that cannot be represented in English.

drop as the honeycomb. Probably better 'drop virgin honey.' These words are generally explained either as referring to 'kisses' or to 'loving words' (cf. Prov. v. 3 and xvi. 24), but an examination of analogous Eastern poetry makes almost certain a comparison that seems strange and hardly pleasant to Western ideas. The *wasf*, so often quoted, reckons among the beauties of the bride the following epithet: 'her saliva pure virgin honey.' The idea that brings this into the categories of beauty is that the moisture in the mouth adds to the glistening splendour of the teeth.

12. The metaphors here employed are frequent in Oriental verse for virgin charms (cf. i. 8).

13. shoots. Here the comparisons proceed to the trees within the garden—the charms of their fruits, the fragrance of their flowers—all descriptive of the bride's person. (Cf. an Egyptian poem quoted by Lane, p. 286: 'She granted me a reception, the graceful of form, after her distance and coyness. The odours of musk and ambergris were diffused by a person whose form surpassed the elegance of a straight and slender branch.')

Henna with spikenard plants,
Spikenard and saffron, 14
Calamus and cinnamon, with all trees of frankincense;
Myrrh and aloes, with all the chief spices.
Thou art a fountain of gardens, 15
A well of living waters,
And flowing streams from Lebanon.

Awake, O north wind; and come, thou south; 16
Blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow
out.
Let my beloved come into his garden,
And eat his precious fruits.

I am come into my garden, my sister, *my* bride: 5
I have gathered my myrrh with my [a] spice;

[a] Or, *balsam*

---

14. Of the spices here named, the only one that requires special elucidation is that translated 'aloes,' which is certainly not the plant ordinarily so designated in English. It is neither the bitter 'aloe,' employed in medicine, nor the 'American aloe,' familiar as a decorative plant in gardens and conservatories. The plant here named seems to be some species of so-called 'eagle-wood,' which is widely distributed over South-East Asia, and was much prized for the fragrance diffused by it when burned.

16. This and the following verse may either belong to the previous song, as above suggested, or constitute a little lyric by themselves. If the latter, it might well be entitled, 'Anticipation and Realization.' The exquisite imagery of this verse requires no comment save to note that the language is figurative, and constitutes an appeal from the bride for the presence of her beloved.

v. **1.** This verse is the bridegroom's answer, and again, in figurative language, describes his delight in love fulfilled.

spice. As the margin suggests, this is probably 'balsam.' The word occurs again in v. 13 and vi. 2. The balsam grew profusely in the neighbourhood of Jericho, which was famous for it, as is also the neighbourhood of Mecca. It was much prized as an aromatic spice, and by some is regarded as almost, if not quite,

I have eaten my honeycomb with my honey;
I have drunk my wine with my milk.
Eat, O friends;
Drink, yea, drink abundantly, [a] O beloved.

2 [b] I was asleep, but my heart waked:

---

[a] Or, *of love* [b] Or, *I sleep, but my heart waketh*

equivalent to myrrh. From an examination of the passages in the Song of Songs, where the word occurs, it is found always in close connexion with myrrh, as here, so that it probably was a special variety of that substance.

eat . . . drink. The words rendered respectively 'friends' and 'beloved' in this verse may mean 'caresses' and 'love,' and some would so render them. The metaphor, however, appears rather harsh, though the meaning is undoubtedly right. It is no literal invitation to a wedding-feast or to a banquet of good fellowship, but advice to enjoy the same bliss with which he is himself enraptured—the joy of marriage. The language is often employed in Arab poetry. Compare songs quoted by Lane:

> 'Up with us, O true love! Let us intoxicate ourselves
> Under the shade of the jessamine.'

And again:

> 'When will she say to me, O youth! come, and let us intoxicate ourselves?'

(cf. Prov. vii. 18).

Verses 2–7. This is another dream-song (cf. iii. 1–4), of greater beauty and wealth of detail than the earlier one. It is the bride's own account of a vision in which her beloved came to her by night, and how, after a little coy dalliance, she rose to admit him, but found he had vanished, as is so often the tantalizing manner of a dream. The watchmen find her, and she fares ill at their hand, being regarded by them as a suspicious character. With the agony and shame of it she awakes. The dramatists consider this dream to be a strong support of their theory, and deny that it could exist as one of the series of popular wedding-songs (see Harper *in loco*). As a matter of fact, however, this seems a very probable form for a popular song to take, and can be paralleled among the love-lyrics of many peoples.

2. I was asleep. Note the exquisite description here of what actually happened in a dream, and how well it fits even the latest psychological explanation of a phenomena of dreams. The

It is the voice of my beloved that knocketh, *saying*,
Open to me, my sister, my love, my dove, my [a] undefiled:
For my head is filled with dew,
My locks with the drops of the night.
I have put off my coat; how shall I put it on? 3
I have washed my feet; how shall I defile them?
My beloved put in his hand by the hole *of the door*, 4
And my [b] heart was moved [c] for him.

---

[a] Heb. *perfect*.
[b] Heb. *bowels*.
[c] According to many MSS., *within me*

---

extreme beauty of the whole passage makes comment almost unnecessary and impertinent, but one or two words may be better for explanatory notes.

undefiled: probably 'paragon.' 'My paragon' better expresses the idea of the original.

filled with dew. The dews of Palestine are extremely heavy, and have more the appearance of a Scotch mist than anything else known in this country. They come in the night, and are very much finer than ordinary rain. As Cheyne suggests, 'night mist' would be a better rendering here and in similar passages (see the article 'Dew' in *Enc. Bibl.*).

3. This and the remaining verses of the dream are, of course, the girl's own words.

coat. Better, 'tunic.' The single under garment.

washed. This, of course, was always requisite for wearers of sandals. The word rendered 'defile' and several other words in the passage all belong to the period of late Hebrew, and thus have a bearing on the date of the book.

4. hole. The reference here is to the lattice mentioned in ii. 9, through which those within might speak with outsiders without being seen. Apparently he put his hand through this opening and beckoned, or in some way made a sign that his love recognized.

for him. Many manuscripts read 'within me,' as in Ps. xlii. 4, &c. Either rendering gives excellent sense, but the reading of the text is probably correct.

Some interpreters regard the hole in the door as that by which, in certain forms of Eastern lock, it is requisite for the person who wishes to open the door from the outside to insert his arm with the key (see *HBD.* art. 'House,' vol. ii, p. 434, and art. 'Key,' also Lane, p. 38). This, however, is very improbable, for it would then mean that her lover purposed to enter by stealth, and thus the mention of his knocking proves to be a misconception.

5 I rose up to open to my beloved;
And my hands dropped with myrrh,
And my fingers with liquid myrrh,
Upon the handles of the bolt.
6 I opened to my beloved;
But my beloved had [a] withdrawn himself, *and* was gone.
My soul [b] had failed me when he spake:
I sought him, but I could not find him;
I called him, but he gave me no answer.
7 The watchmen that go about the city found me,
They smote me, they wounded me;
The keepers of the walls took away my [c] mantle from me.

[a] Or, *turned away* [b] Heb. *went forth.* [c] Or, *veil*

---

5. The reference to the myrrh dropping from her fingers shows that she had put these unguents on her hands before going to rest (cf. i. 12 and note).

6. when he spake. It is difficult to see why she should faint at the sound of her lover's voice, and the excess of joy of which the commentators speak seems hardly a sufficient reason. The word may also be translated, however, 'when he turned away,' a meaning which seems much more appropriate to the passage, especially as it is the ordinary meaning in later Hebrew.

7. The watchmen. Her encounter with the watchmen, if it is not altogether to be put down to the distorted imagery of a dream, shows that at the period at which this poem was written those who were supposed to protect the property and person of the citizens were frequently guilty of acts of violence; for, whatever their suspicions about her character were, they had no right to treat her with such rudeness, unless, indeed, she suggests that the watchmen were themselves guilty of assaulting her, and that to escape their hands she struggled hard, and finally fled, leaving her mantle with them, as did the young man on the night of the betrayal of Jesus (cf. Mark xiv. 51, 52). Riehm considers that the word mantle designates a thin lawn wrap, which Oriental women frequently throw over the whole dress; but it is improbable that she would be wearing such a garment when she had rushed out hurriedly in the night, and the warmer mantle better suits all the circumstances.

I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem, if ye find my beloved, 8
[a]That ye tell him, that I am sick of love.

What is thy beloved more than *another* beloved, 9
O thou fairest among women?
What is thy beloved more than *another* beloved,
That thou dost so adjure us?

My beloved is white and ruddy, 10
[b]The chiefest among ten thousand.
His head is *as* the most fine gold, 11
His locks are [c]bushy, *and* black as a raven.

---

[a] Heb. *What will ye tell him? That &c.*

[b] Heb. *Marked out by a banner.*

[c] Or, *curling*

---

8. I adjure you. All commentators feel a difficulty in giving any plausible connexion between this verse and what precedes. It is much better to separate it entirely from the preceding verses, and to suppose that it is either an introduction to the next song, or that it is out of place here altogether, and may perhaps be an introduction to the song commencing at vii. 10. Here, perhaps, in place of it should be found the verse that has twice occurred already, namely ii. 7 and iii. 5. Either, then, in this revised form, or as the text stands, verses 8 to 16 constitute the bride's song in praise of her bridegroom—a *wasf* of the opposite sex to be paralleled with those in chaps. iv and vii.

10. white and ruddy. Compare the description of David (1 Sam. xvi. 12) and of the nobles of Zion (Lam. iv. 7).

chiefest among ten thousand. The phrase so rendered is uncertain in meaning. The margin renders 'marked out by a banner,' but it may also mean 'raised like a banner,' i. e. 'eminent' or 'distinguished,' as taken from another root. It comes to much the same meaning, namely, conspicuous. Cheyne alters the Hebrew slightly, and renders 'perfect in beauty.' Whatever the exact nature of the phrase be, the meaning is clear.

11. fine gold. (Compare Lam. iv. 2.) Is it possible that in this description (cf. 14, 15) there can be any suggestion drawn from the famous 'chryselephantine' statues of the Greeks? These, which seem barbarous to modern taste, were executed by the finest Greek sculptors in gold and ivory.

bushy. The word so rendered does not occur elsewhere in

12 His eyes are like doves beside the water brooks;
Washed with milk, *and* [a] fitly set.
13 His cheeks are as a bed of [b] spices, *as* [c] banks of sweet
herbs:
His lips are *as* lilies, dropping liquid myrrh.
14 His hands are *as* [d] rings of gold set with [e] beryl:

[a] Or, *sitting by full streams* [b] Or, *balsam*
[c] Or, *towers of perfumes* [d] Or, *cylinders* [e] Or, *topaz*

Hebrew, and consequently a certain amount of conjecture is requisite in its interpretation. The LXX renders 'palm-buds,' or perhaps the sheaths of the palm-buds, which are curly, and so a fitting comparison for hair. Whatever the precise figure that underlies the word, it is certain that the wave or curl of the locks is what is praised.

12. eyes. The comparison here, though much discussed, seems to be to that of the pupil and iris of the eye being in colour like a dove, surrounded by the white, which is compared either to streams of water or of milk, the later term being possibly suggested by the foam of a rapid, rushing stream.

fitly set. The connexion of these words is in the first place uncertain, whether, that is to say, they are referable to eyes or doves. If the former, they may be descriptive of the full, round eyes beloved by Orientals: if the latter, then the doves are spoken of as sitting beside full streams; but eventually the figure is of much the same significance.

13. The two words **bed . . . banks.** Here the figure returns to a garden and compares the beard scented with fragrant perfumes (cf. Ps. cxxxiii. 2) to beds of sweetly-smelling herbs. The beard is to the Oriental a sign of virile strength and honour, and is thus used to swear by, as being synonymous of a man's honour.

lilies. Compare ii. 1, note.

14. rings of gold. More correctly 'cylinders of gold,' the reference being to the finely-tapered fingers (cf. *wasf* so frequently quoted:

'Her smooth, fine fingers are like the writing-reed not yet cut').

beryl. Rather, 'topaz' or 'chrysolite.' The stone varies much in colour, but there seems to be one variety that fairly resembles the colour of healthy, well-polished finger-nails. In the *wasf* there is a comparison of a different nature, but with the same purpose;

His body is *as* [a] ivory work [b] overlaid *with* sapphires.
His legs are *as* pillars of marble, set upon sockets of fine 15
gold:
His aspect is like Lebanon, excellent as the cedars.
His [c] mouth is most sweet: yea, he is altogether lovely. 16
This is my beloved, and this is my friend,
O daughters of Jerusalem.

[a] Or, *bright ivory* [b] Or, *encrusted*
[c] Or, *speech* Heb. *palate.*

'The glance of her nails is like millet-seeds which have lain over night in milk.'

ivory. The rich yellow colour of ivory, as it used to be treated by the sculptor or craftsman, makes a splendid comparison to the skin of the Eastern. The reference to sapphire as encrusting or overlaying this is either to the veins showing through the skin or, as Budde hints, to the contrast between the skin-colour and the blue raiment worn over it. It is indeed possible that we are not to find any strict comparison in the human body to both ivory and sapphire, but that its general beauty is referred to, and the description applies to some work of art made in ivory and sapphire. The former explanation is, however, more likely.
15. marble. The word may mean 'alabaster,' which in colour more nearly resembles the skin of an Oriental, but it must not be forgotten that when used in statuary marble was treated with oil by the sculptor, which gave it a rich flesh-tint.

Lebanon. The point is the dignity and grandeur of Lebanon. We quote from Dalman, p. 133, a *wasf* in praise of a male lover as an analogy with that given in this chapter:—

'Brown is his flesh when the wind blows back his raiment.
Long is his hair as long cords, and darker than the darkest night.
His brow shines brighter than the pole-star: it is like the ten-days-old moon when it rises.
His nose is like a sharp sword, like the well-forged blades of Damascus.
His cheeks excel in sweetness a rose-garden, and it is fair to pluck their blossoms when they are fresh.
His mouth is sweetness itself to me, for it is filled with the dew of honey which heals all suffering when one drinks it.
His neck is like the neck of a gazelle, as it flees before the hunter.
On his hand is a ray as of piercing fire, and many rings of gold.

6 Whither is thy beloved gone,
O thou fairest among women?
Whither hath thy beloved turned him,
That we may seek him with thee?
2 My beloved is gone down to his garden, to the beds of [a] spices,
To feed in the gardens, and to gather lilies.
3 [b] I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine:

[a] Or, *balsam* [b] See ch. ii. 16.

His body is like Indian muslin, the precious purchase of the merchant.

His limbs are formed like marble pillars, and when he draws near you hear the music of the rings upon his ankles.

I have seen no man like him, and all men envy him.'

vi. 1-3. These verses, constituting a question of the bride's companions and her reply, are almost entirely made up of phrases similar to those already employed in the poem. The question is thus suggested whether they are not a fragment of some other song here misplaced. Were these verses combined with v. 4-16, iv. 16, and v. 1 they would make a very beautiful lyric, and their respective isolation would be removed. The suggested restoration is as follows: vi. 1, iv. 16, vi. 2, 3, v. 1. The song would then run:

'Whither is thy beloved gone,
O thou fairest among women?
Whither hath thy beloved turned him,
That we may seek him with thee?'

Bride:

'Awake, awake, O north wind; and come, thou south;
Blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow out.
Let my beloved come into his garden,
And eat his precious fruits.
My beloved is gone down to his garden, to the beds of spices,
To feed in the gardens, and to gather lilies.
I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine:
He feedeth among the lilies.'

Bridegroom:

'I am come into my garden,' &c., to end of verse, namely, 'drink abundantly, O beloved.'

3 is an exact repetition of ii. 16.

He feedeth *his flock* among the lilies.

Thou art beautiful, O my love, as Tirzah, 4
Comely as Jerusalem,
Terrible as [a] an army with banners.

---

[a] Heb. *bannered* hosts.

4–10. Here is another song descriptive of the beauty of the bride, in many ways like that contained in chap. iv. The tenth verse, however, has got misplaced, and should stand first as the introductory question leading up to the description (cf. v. 9).

4. In answer to the query of the previous verse comes the praise by the bridegroom of his bride.

The names used for moon and sun in the verse are uncommon and poetic ones.

Terrible. This latter simile is a repetition of the last clause of verse 4, and properly means 'bannered hosts,' though the LXX translates it as 'phalanxes,' and the figure applies either to the conquering power of her beauty or the repelling power of her purity upon those who would attempt unwelcome advances. Cheyne thinks there is a double corruption of the passage, and that the scribe, misunderstanding a Hebrew word, wrote 'awe-inspiring as towers,' but that originally the words were the same as in ii. 1, and should read, 'lovely as the lily of the valley.' This seems rather too drastic a treatment of the original.

Tirzah. This is traditionally described as an ancient city of Ephraim (Joshua xii. 24), and became the site of the palace of the kings of Israel from the days of Jeroboam to those of Omri; and even after it had been abandoned as the capital in favour of Samaria it still remained an important fortress. Various identifications of modern place-names with the ancient Tirzah have been attempted, but none of them is satisfactory. The name appears in various Hebrew authorities as Tiran or Taritha. Cheyne has further raised the question as to whether Tirzah is the proper form of the name at all, and suggests in preference Zarethan or Zarepath; but the latter place, he argues, was situated in the south, not in the north, as is generally supposed. Probably the place cannot, with our present knowledge, be identified, but it may have been a rival of Jerusalem, not only in importance, but in beauty of situation. Finally, some editors cut out the words altogether as interfering with the metre, as well as introducing irrelevant ideas, while Cheyne completely alters them to read, 'Thou art fair, my friend, as the crocus, and comely as the lily of the valleys.'

5 Turn away thine eyes from me,
For they [a] have overcome me.
[b] Thy hair is as a flock of goats,
That lie along the side of Gilead.
6 [c] Thy teeth are like a flock of ewes,
Which are come up from the washing,
Whereof every one hath twins,
And none is bereaved among them.
7 [d] Thy temples are like a piece of a pomegranate
Behind thy veil.
8 There are threescore queens, and fourscore concubines,
And [e] virgins without number.
9 My dove, my [f] undefiled, is *but* one;
She is the only one of her mother;
She is the [g] choice one of her that bare her.

[a] Or, *make me afraid.* [b] See ch. iv. 1. [c] See ch. iv. 2.
[d] See ch. iv. 3. [e] Or, *maidens* [f] Heb. *perfect.*
[g] Or, *pure*

---

5. thine eyes. The thought of the passage seems to be that the eyes of the bride make her lover tremble, like the eyes of a sorcerer, mightier than armed hosts, though it is possible to translate the word with the entirely opposite meaning of 'encourage'; but its general usage and the evidence of the versions is in favour of the ordinary translation. The latter part of this verse and the two following verses are almost exactly repeated from iv. 1-3 (cf. the notes there).

8. This reference to the harem of a great prince is taken by the historical interpreters of the book to be without question a reference to Solomon, but this is not necessarily so, and the contrast expressed may simply be that between the loveless magnificence of the palace and the joy of true love in the village home. The word translated 'virgins' has not that meaning in strictness, but simply signifies girls of marriageable age (cf. Isa. vii. 14).

9. choice. As the margin indicates, this may also be rendered 'pure,' but more probably the translation of the text is the accurate one, as it better fits the context, and in the later stage of the language, from analogous uses of the root, it may well have borne that meaning. A difficulty is felt by some interpreters

The daughters saw her, and called her blessed;
Yea, the queens and the concubines, and they praised her.

Who is she that looketh forth as the morning, 10
Fair as the moon,
[a] Clear as the sun,
[b] Terrible as an army with banners?

I went down into the garden of nuts, 11
To see the green plants of the valley,

[a] Or, *Pure* [b] See ver. 4.

---

as to the latter part of the verse. They insist that it must have been written of an actual occurrence, and that therefore the girl must have been present at the court of Solomon; but, surely, these words may quite easily fit an ideal situation, and the meaning be, that if she were imagined to be in the king's court, even his favourites would be compelled to confess the superiority of her loveliness.

10. As the morning. This reference is to the clear light of dawn, while the following comparisons to moon and sun are very frequent in Eastern poetry, as, for example, in a line of a peasant's poem quoted by Dalman, *P. D.*, p. 111, 'Thy countenance is bright as the full moon on its rising.'

11. These two verses, though very obscure, are probably, if taken as explained below, a short song of the bride, descriptive of the suddenness with which her marriage was brought about. While she was scarcely dreaming of any such thing, her bridegroom suddenly appeared, vanquished her heart, and she found herself a bride. Though this is the most probable explanation, it is also possible that the words may be a fragment of another song similar to, or even part of, that contained in vii. 10–12. This is made more probable because the LXX adds to verse 11 the same words that are rendered in vii. 12, 'there will I give thee my love.' In both cases the LXX renders 'breasts,' but that is, of course, only indicative of the lovers' close embrace (cf. Ezek. xxiii. 3), i. 2 and note.

garden of nuts. All seem agreed that this refers to an orchard of walnut-trees, which are very common all over North Palestine.

plants. This would be more accurately rendered 'green shoots,' but whether it refers to the fresh growth of the spring by

To see whether the vine budded,
And the pomegranates were in flower.
12 Or ever I was aware, my [a] soul [b] set me
Among the chariots of my [c] princely people.

13 [d] Return, return, O Shulammite;
Return, return, that we may look upon thee.

[a] Or, *desire* [b] Or, *made me* like *the chariots of Amminadib* [c] Or, *willing* [d] [Ch. vii. 1 in Heb.]

---

the stream-side, or whether, as some suppose, to the buds on the vines, is uncertain.

12. This is probably the most obscure verse in the whole book, and has been translated in a variety of different ways, even with the existing text, while many editors seek with more or less success to attempt emendations. Siegfried gives it up altogether as being hopelessly corrupt. The older versions and the A.V. understood the last words of the verse as a proper name, Amminadib, but this place has never been identified with any probability, and, even if it were known, would afford no satisfactory meaning. It is more general, therefore, to break it up into two words which mean 'princely people,' and render 'set me upon the chariot of my princely people,' or, connecting the words otherwise, 'a princely one who has set me upon the chariot of my people.' But we have the further difficulty of the words rendered 'my soul set me.' This should probably be 'my desire' or 'longing'; but in what sense could this be said to bring her to the chariot of her people? By a slight alteration of the original we might render, 'before ever I understood my desire, I was set, &c.,' and this is probably the best that can be done with it. It is certainly more satisfactory than is the explanation of many who render, 'My longing to see these things brought me to where the chariots were.' Cheyne emends the original so radically as to make it read, 'there will I give thee my love,' which is little else than a counsel of despair. The most probable explanation of the whole verse seems to be that suggested by Budde, that the reference is to the chariot of the wedding procession; and we might paraphrase the whole sentence as follows—in order to make the meaning clear:—'While I was wandering among the walnut-trees and strolling by the stream-side, to watch the new growth of spring, the budding vines, and blossoming pomegranates, hardly conscious of my own deepest longings, my prince came and set me on the wedding-car.'

13. This verse is probably an introductory chorus to the

Why will ye look upon the Shulammite,
As upon the dance [a] of Mahanaim?

How beautiful are thy [b] feet in sandals, O prince's daughter! 7

---

[a] Or, *of two companies* [b] Or, *steps*

---

wasfs that follow, the first two lines being sung by the chorus and the second two being the words of the bride.

Shulammite. The introduction of this proper name into the text causes great difficulty. Why is the bride here spoken of as from Shulam? The place is frequently named in the O. T., and is generally identified with a place near Jezreel, now called Solam or Sulem. The Greek and other versions read Shunammite, which is probably correct here, since the letters 'n' and 'l' frequently alternate in Palestine place-names. The Shunammite here referred to is probably the 'fair damsel' brought to David (1 Kings i. 3), whose name may very well have become almost proverbial as that of an ideal beauty. Otherwise, we must suppose the word simply to refer to the girl's native village, which is also a possible explanation. This gives the title to Aubrey Moore's lovely picture in the Liverpool gallery, which represents the bride in the midst of her companions in an attitude of graceful modesty and yet shy expectancy.

the dance of Mahanaim. This is another proper name which must in all probability vanish from the text. As the margin shows, it can be rendered, 'two companies.' The place was well known in the O.T., and is frequently named as a stronghold of North Gilead, and for a little while became the capital of Ishbosheth. Its modern site is thought to be Ajlun. If the word is allowed to stand in the text, it must then be descriptive of a special dance associated with that place (cf. Abel-Meholah, 1 Kings xix. 16, which means dancing valley). On the other hand, if the word is translated it may be rendered 'dance of the two companies,' which may either describe a sort of country dance, or, as Budde supposes, the bridal sword-dance. It seems most probable that the dance thus named was some famous spectacular performance, and the bride remonstrates with the onlookers for expecting her poor performance to equal it. Cheyne so alters the text as to make the words read, 'a lily of the valleys.'

vii. 1–9. We have to remember all through that the description is that of a girl dancing, while her dress is of some gauzy material that shows the figure to perfection.

1. Feet. Rather, 'steps,' the reference being to the rapid movement of the feet in the elaborate dance (probably the sword-

[a] The joints of thy thighs are like jewels,
The work of the hands of a cunning workman.
2 Thy navel is *like* a round goblet,
Wherein no mingled wine is wanting:

---

[a] Or, *Thy rounded thighs*

dance previously mentioned), though there may be a further thought of the beautiful jewelled shoes upon the dancer's feet, perhaps also to anklets that would shimmer in the light and make music with their tinkling.

prince's daughter. This can scarcely be taken literally. It seems a statement that she is worthy to be the daughter of a prince, because of her extreme beauty. Cheyne would alter the words to read, 'daughter of delights' (cf. vi. 12), but unnecessarily.

joints of thy thighs. This is probably a misunderstanding of the original, which seemingly refers to the beauty of outline of the upper part of the lower limbs as the body sways to and fro in the graceful movements of the dance. Oriental dancing gives much more scope for such movements as best reveal the suppleness of the body than does that with which we are most familiar.

jewels. The word signifies necklet and similar ornaments, and seems never to be used in any other sense. It is not at all easy to understand the metaphor here if the comparison is with the movements of the limbs. Perhaps we may imagine the dance being performed by torchlight, and the gleam upon flesh and garment suggesting the flashes of light upon gold, silver, and gems. This is more probable than many of the explanations suggested. The song quoted below from Dalman gives a hint (cf. iv. 9) of quite another idea, which may probably be correct.

2. navel. This word stands elsewhere in the O. T. as synonymous with body (cf. Job xi. 16 A. V.; Prov. iii. 8, R. V.). Here, however, this more general meaning will not suffice, and yet the English rendering is not appropriate. The word is probably descriptive of the whole of the lower part of the body. Cf. the lines in a *wasf*, given by Dalman.

'Thy navel is like a box cunningly wrought by the artificer and filled with civet, from which there stream the odours of musk and camphor, and thy body is like silk twined in skeins, whiter than the whitest silk or carded wool. Thy thighs—the pillars of thy body—by their beauty, hold me as in a prison house, and love itself trembles as with fear at the beauty of thy perfectly formed ankles.'

Thy belly is *like* an heap of wheat
Set about with lilies.
[a] Thy two breasts are like two fawns 3
That are twins of a roe.
Thy neck is like the tower of ivory; 4
Thine eyes *as* the pools in Heshbon, by the gate of Bath-rabbim;
Thy nose is like the tower of Lebanon
Which looketh toward Damascus.

---

[a] See ch. iv. 5.

It is not difficult to trace the influence of this section of the Song of Songs in a mediaeval poem printed as No. 34 in Mr. J. A. Symonds's collection entitled 'Wine, Women, and Song.'

The reference to 'mingled wine' is probably by way of perfecting the description of the goblet, which is regarded as only reaching the height of its beauty when the wine shines inside it.

belly. This might be rendered 'body' with more appropriateness, as the metaphor brings out the rich, golden colour of the flesh to describe which winnowed wheat was a favourite Eastern simile. We are told that on the threshing-floors the heaps of grain are sometimes decorated with flowers, and the suggestion here may arise from the contrast of the dancer's garment with her body. In the poem already quoted we find a description of a kindred character, where the poet says, 'thy body is like twining skeins of silk, whiter than woven silk or carded cotton.'

3. See 4, 5.

4. neck. Cf. iv. 4. P. Haupt quotes Hall Caine's description in the *Manxman* of Kate's neck: 'It was round, and full, and soft, and like a tower.'

Heshbon. A town of Moab, frequently referred to in the O. T. It has a fine situation about 600 feet above the valley. Among the ruins are those of a large reservoir, which has by some been identified with one of the pools here mentioned; but the reference is more probably to some of the large number of pools which are still found in the neighbourhood. Cheyne suggests a somewhat radical alteration of the text, which would make the passage read, 'Thine eyes are like Solomon's pools by the wood of Bethcerem (place of a vineyard),' and considers that an illustrative description of the place is found in Eccles. ii. 4–6.

tower of Lebanon. This was probably some watch-tower on the mountains, that was well known to the people. Cf. v. 15.

5 Thine head upon thee is like Carmel,
And the hair of thine head [a] like purple;
The king is held captive in the tresses *thereof.*
6 How fair and how pleasant art thou,
O love, for delights!

[a] Some ancient versions have, *like the purple of a king, bound &c.*

---

5. Carmel. The point of the description here is the lonely grandeur of the mountain comparable to a proudly-held head.

purple. Brides' tresses are described as with a sheen of purple upon them, which is true of intensely black hair.

tresses. The word thus translated occurs very seldom, and in the other instances obviously means 'water-troughs.' It is supposed, therefore, that the connecting idea is that of 'flowing,' the hair flowing over the shoulders being the origin of the application of the term. The metaphor of the lover, as held by the locks of his beloved, is a common Eastern one. Compare the song already quoted, 'Thy hair upon thy shoulders is like binding cords, like wings of the storm in a darksome night.' Cheyne, however, refuses to accept the ordinary derivation, and regards the word as a corruption of pomegranate, and renders, most improbably, 'Pleasant are they as an orchard of pomegranate trees.' As has been frequently said in the course of this exposition, the form of these lines has many parallels in Eastern verse, and a very lovely one is to be found in a Burmese love-song quoted by Mr. Hall in his exquisite volume *The Soul of a People:* 'She is more beautiful than any blossom; her face is as delicate as the dusk; her hair is as night falling over the hills; her skin is as bright as the diamond. She is very full of health, no sickness can come near her. When the wind blows I am afraid, when the breezes move I fear. I fear lest the south wind take her, I tremble lest the breath of evening woo her from me, so light is she, so graceful. Her dress is of gold, even of silk and gold, and her bracelets are of fine gold. She has precious stones in her ears, but her eyes, what jewels can compare unto them?'

6. O love, for delights. Two questions here arise, namely, whether love is to be taken as abstract or concrete, whether it is an apostrophe of the passion, or an address to the maiden; probably the latter is correct. In the second place 'for' should probably be 'among' or 'above,' placing her pre-eminently beyond all conceivable joys. Siegfried considers the verse an interpolation, but it is possibly a kind of interlude before turning to the new theme of the following verses.

This thy stature is like to a palm tree, 7
And thy breasts to clusters *of grapes*.
I said, I will climb up into the palm tree, 8
I will take hold of the branches thereof:
Let thy breasts be as clusters of the vine,
And the smell of thy [a] breath like apples;
And thy [b] mouth like the best wine, 9
That goeth down [c] smoothly for my beloved,
[d] Gliding through the lips of those that are asleep.

I am my beloved's, 10

---

[a] Heb. *nose.* [b] Heb. *palate.* [c] Heb. *aright.*
[d] Or, *Causing the lips of those that are asleep to move* or *speak*

---

7. palm tree. The slenderness and straightness of the tree renders it an appropriate metaphor for the fine figure of the bride, while the bunches of dates, that with their golden colour are said to intensify so strikingly the beauty of the tree, are here compared with the rounded form of the breasts. In similar poems we find the breasts compared with pomegranates or apples, and in one case with an inverted cup of purest porcelain.

8. This is a poetic description of the bridegroom's taking possession of the person of his bride. It is questionable whether 'clusters of the vine' is correct or not, and whether we must not understand it of the date-clusters, as in the former verse. The fragrance of apples (or quinces; see ii. 3) is one greatly enjoyed by Orientals, and hence an appropriate figure for the sweet lips of the bride.

9. This verse is very difficult to translate, and consequently to interpret. There is probably some original corruption in the text, for the LXX and other versions render the last clause 'gliding over my lips and teeth,' and probably that comes as near the meaning as we can hope to reach. The probability is that the whole comparison is between the sweetness of the bride's kisses and the delicious flavour of good wine.

vii. 10—viii. 5. The whole of this section consists of a song by the bride indicative of her great affection for the bridegroom, and it is couched in the language of the country and full of the scenery of her village home. The very dainties that she promises him are those which would be prepared by her own hands, or gathered in her own orchard. The song closes with two verses that we have

And his desire is toward me.
11 Come, my beloved, let us go forth into the field;
Let us lodge in the villages.
12 Let us get up early to the vineyards;
Let us see whether the vine hath budded, *and* [a] its blossom be open,
And the pomegranates be in flower:
There will I give thee my love.
13 The [b] mandrakes give forth fragrance,

---

[a] Or, *the tender grape appear* [b] See Gen. xxx. 14.

already met with in an earlier part of the book, so that they are probably a conventional refrain.

10. I am my beloved's. These words have already occurred in iii. 16 and vi. 3, and some editors, therefore, consider them as an inserted clause here. This does not, however, seem necessary, rather are they to be regarded as a conventional opening of a song, which also closes with conventional phraseology.

11. Come, my beloved. There is a freedom of utterance about the bride's invitation to her bridegroom that may seem to Western minds hardly consonant with the appropriate feelings of modesty; but we must remember that Oriental language is freer than ours, and that if, as we suppose all through, the marriage has already been consummated, it is no longer the words of the maiden, but of the bride in the eagerness of her new-found gladness.

Let us lodge. This possibly means 'spend the night,' and instead of 'in the villages,' the words should almost certainly be rendered 'among the henna-flowers' (cf. iv. 13); the latter is more in keeping with the whole imagery of the poem and with the lusciousness of the passage.

Let us get up early. The imagery of the song suggests that day as well as night is to be given up to the joy of love, and there may be a subtle connexion between the beauties of the spring and the promise of fruit in the orchard and their own newly-wedded life. Some interpreters, indeed, regard all these references to outward nature as purely figurative of the bride's physical charms, but surely the association of the two is more true to poetry than to hold that there is no thought of outward nature at all.

13. mandrakes. This is a fruit something like a plum in appearance, round and yellow, possessed of a peculiar fragrance and a pleasant taste. The plant had magical associations attached

And [a] at our doors are all manner of precious fruits, new
and old,
Which I have laid up for thee, O my beloved.
Oh that thou wert as my brother, 8
That sucked the breasts of my mother!
When I should find thee without, I would kiss thee;
Yea, and none would despise me.
I would lead thee, *and* bring thee into my mother's house, 2
[b] Who would instruct me;

---

[a] Or, *over* [b] Or, *That thou mightest*

---

to it, and was called distinctly the 'love apple' (cf. Gen. xxx. 14). The married women of Palestine regard the eating of the fruit as certain to save them from the reproach of barrenness.

at our doors. Rather, 'over our doors.' This seems to refer to fruit stored on shelves or ledges beneath the cottage roof, a picturesque touch of homeliness. The bride will show her beloved the simple but precious gifts which she has stored up for him.

viii. **1. as my brother.** The words here are supposed to be difficult to fit in with what precedes and follows them. The bride, it is said, has been using very ardent language, and presently returns to it, but here she is regarded as using the shy and modest language of a young girl who is unconventional enough to wish her lover to be her brother that she may kiss him freely where and when she likes. But after all, is this a sign of such excessive modesty? Do not the words rather suggest the desire to lavish caresses upon her bridegroom both in public and private, and so fit in with the whole tenor of the passage?

2. I would lead thee. Here the same idea is continued, and she desires such freedom of intercourse as would be unchallenged and unrestrained in any circumstances.

Who would instruct me. It is possible to translate these words either thus, or 'that thou mightest instruct me,' or, as a definite future statement, 'thou wilt instruct me.' If we render it in either of these ways, it obviously means that she desires to be taught the secrets and fascinations of love, either at the hand of her mother or of her bridegroom, both of whom are regarded, appropriately enough, as competent instructors. But the Greek and Syriac versions read here the same words that occur in iii. 4, namely, 'into the chamber of her that conceived me.' This is

I would cause thee to drink of spiced wine,
Of the [a] juice of my pomegranate.
3 [b] His left hand *should be* under my head,
And his right hand should embrace me.

4 I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem,
[c] That ye stir not up, nor awaken love,
Until it please.

5 Who is this that cometh up from the wilderness,
Leaning upon her beloved?

[a] Or, *sweet wine* [b] See ch. ii. 6, 7.
[c] Heb. *Why should ye stir up? or why &c.*

---

probably the true text, and what she desires is that her mother's bridal chamber should also be her own.

3, 4. With these verses, which have already occurred in another song, earlier in the book, she concludes her passionate appeal.

5–14. This closing section of the poem is extremely difficult, on any theory of its composition, as the connexion of the various sections is not at all clear. The dramatic interpreters think that they have found a solution, and Professor Harper says that on his theory 'everything is simple, intelligible, and natural,' while, that on the theory taken in this commentary the verses are full of 'insuperable difficulty.' An impartial investigation of his commentary, or any similar one, should convince the reader that it is not so simple as he supposes. Probably there has been some original dislocation of the text, and in addition to this it is very difficult to tell whether certain verses, e. g. 11, 12, and 13, are to be assigned to the bridegroom or to the bride. Taken in the order in which they stand, the section contains the following: First, question by the chorus, then a verse from the bridegroom reminiscent of the bride's home. Following upon this comes the most famous passage of the book, the bride's praise of the power of love. Next are verses apparently to be attributed to the bride's guardians, in which they speak of their watchfulness over her. Then follows a declaration by the bride that she is safe in her bridegroom's care. This is followed by words that, in all probability, are to be attributed to the bridegroom, in which he contrasts favourably his own possession with the boasted wealth of Solomon, and the song concludes with either two verses sung by the bride or, more likely, verse 13 by the bridegroom and verse

Under the apple tree I awakened thee:
There thy mother was in travail with thee,
There was she in travail [a] that brought thee forth.

Set me as a seal upon thine heart, as a seal upon thine 6
arm:
For love is strong as death;
Jealousy is [b] cruel as [c] the grave:

---

[a] Or, *and* [b] Heb. *hard.* [c] Heb. *Sheol.*

---

14 the final appeal of the bride, echoing phrases that have been heard already.

This outline shows that the construction of the passage is very complicated, and one is tempted to suggest emendations. The introductory question in verse 5 may have originally stood before the song that commences at vii. 10, and the latter part of the verse might appropriately be inserted at the beginning of chap. viii. Again, verses 8 and 9, which, as they stand at present, have no obvious contact with the verses that precede or that follow them, may originally have been introductory verses to one of the *wasfs* of which the book is full. Perhaps they ought to be inserted before iv. 8 or vii. 1. For the purpose of interpretation we shall now proceed to take the verses as they stand.

5. Cf. iii. 6.

Under the apple tree. These words are surely to be attributed to the bridegroom, though the ordinary Hebrew text makes them the words of the bride. The reference here seems to be to the bride's home, and the awakening is in all probability the awakening to love, not a literal waking out of sleep. Whether or not the apple-tree is to be thought of as overshadowing the cottage, her home is surely referred to, and we are not to suppose that she was actually born under the shade of the tree. Some regard the whole reference to the apple-tree as figurative of love, a quite possible interpretation.

6. seal. The earliest form of seals known to us is the cylindrical one found in Babylon. A cord was passed through the cylinder, and it was worn round the neck, and thus may be spoken of as being over the heart. For the second expression, 'upon thine arm,' Budde suggests 'a bracelet.' This is possible, though we have no instance of seals being worn in such a manner.

cruel as the grave. The literal meaning of the word rendered cruel is 'hard,' and perhaps 'inexorable' would be a good English rendering. The grave is, of course, Sheol, which, as the place of the dead, there is no escaping. In these verses we have one of the highest expressions, not only in Hebrew poetry, but in all

The flashes thereof are flashes of fire,
[a] A very flame of [b] the LORD.
7 Many waters cannot quench love,
Neither can the floods drown it:
If a man would give all the substance of his house for love,
[c] He would utterly be contemned.

---

[a] Or, *A most vehement flame* [b] Heb. *Jah.* [c] Or, *It*

literature, of the power and purity of true love. No misfortune can slay it, nor can any promise of riches tempt a man to exchange it. The unselfishness of true love is beautifully expressed in the closing phrase. Some writers argue that this passage is inconsistent with the view of the book here taken, but that does not seem at all necessary, for though the lover's language is at times sensuous, it is never selfish, nor does it degenerate into the bargaining character of many Oriental wedding contracts. The thoughts that are here expressed are nothing more than the high-water mark of true and loyal devotion, nor is there anything inconsistent with their being the utterance of the young bride who has been portrayed throughout these pages. Some writers consider the words to be the consummation of the book, but this is impossible if the present order is even approximately correct. We must confess that it is very difficult to find an appropriate setting for them, but they seem best placed after verse 10 of the present chapter, when verses 11 and 12 will then form the bridegroom's triumphant response to this magnificent utterance of the bride. We might, indeed, reconstruct the complete song as follows: verses 8, 9, 10, 6, 7, 11, 12. It would then read as follows:—

The Brothers:

'We have a little sister,
And she hath no breasts:
What shall we do for our sister
In the day when she shall be spoken for?
If she be a wall,
We will build upon her battlements of silver:
And if she be a door,
We will enclose her with boards of cedar.'

The Maiden:

'I am a wall, and my breasts like the towers thereof:
Then was I in his eyes as one that found peace.
Set me as a seal upon thine heart.

. . . .

We have a little sister, 8
And she hath no breasts:
What shall we do for our sister
In the day when she shall be spoken for?
If she be a wall, 9
We will build upon her [a] a turret of silver:
And if she be a door,
We will inclose her with boards of cedar.

I [b] am a wall, and my breasts like the towers *thereof*: 10
Then was I in his eyes as one that found peace.
Solomon had a vineyard at Baal-hamon; 11

[a] Or, *battlements* [b] Or, *was*

He would utterly be condemned.'

The Bridegroom:
'Solomon had a vineyard,' &c., to end of verse 12.

8. We have a little sister. These are the words of the bride's guardians, who think of the as yet undeveloped girl and of their responsibility for her in the future. The dramatic critics consider that the words must refer to some definite story of her brother's unkind treatment of her (cf. i. 6), but surely the very opposite is what is here spoken of. They are anxious to preserve her from any harm, and so

9. they promise that should she be like a city wall that keeps out all invaders, they will crown the wall with battlements of silver, i. e. provide her with a good dowry. On the other hand, should she prove like an open door through which any man may walk, they will take care to put a strong barrier of cedar-wood behind the door that no man may open it.

I am a wall. In this verse the maiden vindicates her character. She has reached womanly maturity, and yet preserved her perfect maidenly purity, and both character and beauty of form have commended her to the bridegroom, and in the haven of his love she is at peace. Professor Harper says that, on the theory here maintained, these words are meaningless. But surely they cannot well be clearer.

Solomon had a vineyard. This and the following verse are best given to the bridegroom, who, if the conjectural emendation given above is correct, in these words replies to the impassioned praise of love uttered by the bride. The vineyard referred to may

He let out the vineyard unto keepers;
Every one for the fruit thereof was to bring a thousand *pieces* of silver.
12 My vineyard, which is mine, is before me:
Thou, O Solomon, shalt have the thousand,
And those that keep the fruit thereof two hundred.

13 Thou that dwellest in the gardens,
The companions hearken [a] for thy voice:

---

[a] Or, *to*

have been a famous one, and its fertility so great that it secured a large sum to the vine-dressers. For the last words of the verse are best rendered 'any one would gain a thousand shekels by its fruits.'

12. My vineyard. Here the bridegroom contrasts his possession of the bride with all the vaunted wealth of the kingly vineyard, and says that neither the revenue of its owner nor the wages of its keeper is any temptation to him; the riches of his love are greater in his eyes than princely revenues. This forms a most appropriate response to the words of the bride, 'If a man would give all the substance of his house for love, he would utterly be condemned,' and strengthens the probability of the reconstruction above given. It is also the language of all true and disinterested love, and finds its echo in the love-songs of all nations, though no more appropriate parallel can be found than the gay lines of the old French song:

'Si le roi m'avait donné
Paris, sa grande ville,
Et qu'il me fallut quitter
L'amour de ma mie,
Je dirais au roi Louis:
Reprenez votre Paris.
J'aime mieux ma mie, O gai!
J'aime mieux ma mie.'

This would form the most appropriate close to the poem, and it is possible that verses 13 and 14 are out of place, though it is not easy to suggest where they would find their most appropriate setting. They perhaps belong to one of the songs contained in chap. vi.

13. This is an appeal of the bridegroom to allow him to share the joy of her companions.

Cause me to hear it.

[a] Make haste, my beloved, 14
And be thou like to a [b] roe or to a young hart
Upon the mountains of spices.

[a] Heb. *Flee.* [b] Or, *gazelle*

---

14. This verse constitutes the bride's impassioned cry for her lover, and is couched in language already familiar to the reader.

APPENDIX

ILLUSTRATIVE ORIENTAL POEMS

In a Bedouin song given by Dalman, p. 100, we find many similar metaphors to those found in the song, thus: the lover addresses his beloved :—

'O, her eyebrows are like the lines drawn by the pen.
And the hair on her forehead like the feathers of a bird when it is stained with henna.
Her nose is like the hilt of a sword, an Indian sword that gleams.
It is white as hailstones, and more beautiful still are the rows of her gleaming teeth.
And her cheeks are like the rose-hued apples of Damascus.
And her eyes glow like the eyes of the lynx when they have angered him.
Her breasts are like lovely pomegranates hanging on the tree.
Her neck graceful as the neck of the antelope when he is startled.
Her arms are like bars of pure silver.
And her fingers taper like golden pens.'

The following song, given by Dalman, is sung during the arraying of the bride before she leaves her parents' house :—

'O Sabha, Darling, 'tis to thee we sing:
  In lyric song our voices rise and fall.
We hear thy Father calling, Sabha, Dear,
  We hear thy Father's gentle loving call.

O Sabha of the trustful sable eyes,
  Eyes dark as night, so calm, so deep, so rare:
We hear thy Brother call thee, Sabha, Dear—
  We hear thy Brother call thee, Sabha, Fair.

O Sabha of the rippling golden hair;
  Gold, living gold, its every curling tress:
Let not our sorrow cloud thy faithful heart,
  Let not our sorrow that dear heart distress.

With softest sound of rhythmic melody
  The anklets tinkle on thy Mother's feet.
Sabha, we hear thy Father's Brother call,
  We hear thy Father's Brother call thee, Sweet.

The anklets tinkle, Sabha, on thy feet,
  Making soft melody within the hall.
Sabha, we hear thy Mother's Brother call—
  O Love, we hear thy Mother's Brother call.

We clasp the bracelet on thy white round arm,
  Less round and white the silvery moon appears.
Thine eyes are tenderer than the camel's eyes,
  And hers compare with liquid wells of tears.

Behold the scarlet shoes upon thy feet,
  Each dainty foot lost in a dainty shoe.
Fair as the moon at full thy face is fair,
  More fair than moon thy form, more pure than dew.

I clasp these priceless gems around thy neck,
  They hide the Breast so far more dear to me;
My steed, my camel for thy sake I'd sell,
  My choicest treasure I'd pour out for thee.'

INDEX

[*The Numerals refer to the Pages.*]

Abaddon, 96, 175.
Abishag, 343.
Acrostic poem, 12, 202.
Adam Bede quoted, 24.
Adder, 148.
Adulteress, 56, 57, 138, 147, 197.
Aeschylus quoted, 64.
Agathocles, 259.
Agriculture, 155, 176, 247, 274.
Agur ben Jakeh, 189.
Alabaster, 337.
Alexander Balas, 243, 272.
Allegory, 140, 289.
Almond-tree, 279.
Almsgiving, 71.
Aloes, 331.
Amana, 329.
Amiel quoted, 237.
Amminadib, 342.
Amulet, 39, 108.
Anemone, 313.
Animals, kindness to, 83.
Ant, 52.
Antiochus Epiphanes, 243.
Apple, 314, 351.
Arabic poetry, 5.
Aramaic proverbs, 54, 71.
Aristophanes quoted, 223.
Aristotle quoted, 52.
'Arles,' 51.
Armoury, 327.
Artaxerxes Mnemon, 250.
— Ochus, 250.
Assemblies, Masters of, 282.
Athanasius, 64.
Augustine, use of *Wisdom* by, 24.
Aurelius, M., quoted, 224.

Bacon, Francis, quoted, 163.
Balsam, 331.
Balzac quoted, 302.
Banner, 315.
Beard, 336.
Bed, 59, 313.
Bee, 52.
Belial, 53.
Beryl, 336.
Bether, 321.
Bethsura, 267.
Bickell quoted, 33, 217.
'Blood, man of,' 30.
Books, 282.
Bowels, 34.
Bowl, 280.
Brain, 34.
Breasts, 328.
Bribery, 99, 108, 139, 247, 253.
Bride, 297, 314, 338.
Browning, R., quoted, 23, 243, 275.
Budde, 15, 342.
Bunyan, 44, 48, 50, 72, 77, 80, 87, 88, 98, 138, 168, 170, 183, 184, 193.
Burmese love-song quoted, 346.
Burns, Robert, quoted, 44, 92, 326.
Burton's *Anatomy*, 48.
Butler's sermons quoted, 127, 264.

Canon, 215, 289.
Caper-berry, 280.
Carmel, 346.
Carpet, 59.
Catullus, 204, 272.
Cedar, 323.

Chains, 310.
Chasidim, 35, 256.
Chaucer quoted, 80, 119.
Cheyne, 21, 176, 189, 345, 346.
Chiasm, 76, 195.
Children, 124, 136.
— desire for, 107, 195.
Christie, W., 5, 299.
'Coals of fire,' 162.
Cock, 199.
Coleridge quoted, 320.
Commerce, 203, 206.
Coney, 198.
Construction of the Book of Proverbs, 10, 154.
Cooling drinks, 159.
Coral, 41, 150.
Corban, 126.
Corporal punishment, 73, 90, 138.
Corruption of the Hebrew Text, 246, 247.
Cosmetics, 128.
Cosmogony, Hebrew, 65.
Coverlet, 59, 205.
Crocus, 313.
Curses, 165, 183.
Curtains, 307.
Cushion, 323.

Dalman's *Palästinischer Diwan*, 298, 324, 330, 337, 339, 344, 356.
Dance, 344.
'Daughters of Jerusalem,' 306.
'Day of wrath,' 77.
Death, 266.
Delitzsch, 121, 129, 167.
Dew, 333.
Distaff, 204.
Doors, 333.
Dor, 267.
Doughty quoted, 277.
Dove, 312, 318.
Drama in Song of Songs, 294, 303, 309, 326, 350.
Drayton, M., quoted, 165.
Dreams, 321, 332.
Drink, 122, 202.
Drunkenness, 122, 147-9, 167.
Dunbar quoted, 97, 105, 224, 228, 233, 268.

'Earnest,' 51.
Ecclesiastes, 4, 12, 211-19.
— Integrity of, 215.
Ecclesiasticus, 3, 9, 21, 236.
Edom, 20.
Education, 29, 444.
Egypt, 310.
Ellis, Havelock, quoted, 224.
Engedi, 312.
Epicureans, 237, 240.
Euphemisms, 320.
Euripides quoted, 259.
Evil, Problem of, 100.
— eye, 143.

False witness, 160.
Fatalism, 251.
Faust quoted, 190.
Fear of the Lord, 28.
Feasts, 59, 106.
Fig, 319.
Folk-songs, 3.
Fool, 168, 171, 176, 185, 241, 268, 271.
Forbush quoted, 280.
Fountains, 49, 70.
Foxes, 319.
Frankenberg quoted, 17, 95, 120, 132, 153, 164, 207.
Frederick the Great on *Ecclesiastes*, 212.
French verses, 252, 354.
Friendship, 110, 116, 242.
Froward, 36.
Future life, 237, 239, 263.

Gazelle, 50.
'George Eliot' quoted, 24, 74.
Gifts (*see* Bribery).
Gilead, 325.
Girdle, 206.

Goad, 282.
Goat, 199.
God, 131, 191.
Goel, 145.
Grasshopper (*see also* Locust), 279.
Grätz, 102, 272.
Greek O.T. (*see* Septuagint).
— rule, 117, 133.
Greyhound, 199.
Grinders, 277.

Hagiographa, 4.
Hair dressing, modes of, 310, 325.
Hammurabi, code of, 198.
Handmill, 277.
Harem, 294, 306.
Harlot (*see* Prostitute).
Haupt, 217.
Head-dress, 310, 324.
Hearne, Lafcadio, quoted, 302.
Heart, 34, 47, 145.
Henley quoted, 221.
Henna, 311.
Henryson quoted, 170.
Heshbon, 345.
Hesiod quoted, 71.
Hezekiah, 11, 19.
Hogarth, 49.
Holman Hunt's *The Awakened Conscience*, 162.
Honey, 104, 152, 160, 164, 330.
Horse, 270, 309.
Horse-leech, 184.
Horton, R. F., quoted, 112.
Hosea, 135.
Humour, 76, 132, 159, 166, 168.
Hymns founded on *Song of Songs*, 292.

'Ian Maclaren' quoted, 252.
Ibsen quoted, 122.
Immortality, 232, 239.
Indian proverbs, 54.
Inn, 315.
Interest, 179.
Inversions of R. V., 161, 164, 165, 169, 170.
Irrigation, 128.
Ithiel, 189.
Ivory, 337.

Jackals (*see* Foxes).
Jahweh, 102.
James, H., quoted, 260.
James, Wm., quoted, 13.
Jesus, use of *Proverbs* by, 100, 115, 119, 126, 146, 150, 152, 158, 165, 182, 184, 205.
Jewels, 125, 159, 344.
Job, 12.
Josephus quoted, 37, 144.
Juvenal cited, 279.

Kalevala quoted, 192.
Keble quoted, 92.
Kedan, 306.
Kidneys, 145.
Kissing, 155, 172.
Koheleth, 212.

Landmarks, 142, 144.
Lane's *Modern Egyptians*, 79, 310, 311, 329, 330, 332.
Lattice, 58, 272, 333.
Law (*see* Pentateuch).
Lebanon, 329, 337.
Leech, 194.
Lemuel, 200.
Lilith, 194.
Lily, 313, 320.
Linen, 206.
Liver, 60.
Lizard, 198.
Locust, 198, 279.
Logos, 64, 191.
Lot, 105.
Love, 352, 354.
Luther's version, 167.

Mackie quoted, 176.
Maddox Brown's *Work*, 142.
Madness, 227, 231.
Mahanaim, 343.
Malabathron, 321.
Malan quoted, 52, 54, 92, 95, 110, 114, 115, 123.
Mandrake, 348.
Marble, 337.
Marriage, 50, 289, 324.
— Songs, 4, 291.
Massa, 189, 201.
Maul, 160.
Medicine, ancient, references to, 162.
Megilloth, 4.
Merchants, 206.
Meredith, G., 9.
Metal workers, 157, 175.
Michelet referred to, 302.
Milton quoted, 105.
Miser, 242.
Mortar, 176.
Mourning, 253, 280.
Music, 278.
Myrrh, 311, 328, 332.
Mystical interpretation of *Song of Songs*, 291.

Nails, 282.
Narcissus, 313.
Natron, 161.
Navel, 39, 344.
Nazirites, 122.
Neck, 327.
Necklet, 39, 159, 310.
Nettle, 156.
Night patrol, 334.
Nitre (*see* Natron).
Nose-ring, 79, 159.

Oaths, 260, 264.
Odyssey, quoted, 203, 206, 265.
Ointment, 172, 268, 304, 334.
Omar Khayyam quoted, 228, 239, 251, 252, 305.
Opportunism, 234.
Oracle, 189.
Orchard, 341.

Palanquin, 323.
Palm, 347.
Parallelism, 14.
Paranomasia, 150, 164, 187, 200, 251-3, 265, 330.
Pastoral poetry, 308, 326.
Penn, Wm., 9.
Pentateuch, Knowledge of, 178, 264.
Perfume, 59.
Perowne quoted, 27, 65, 74.
Persian period, 262.
Pessimism, 226, 250.
Pharisees, 35, 256.
Phillips, S., quoted, 206.
Philo, 64.
Phylacteries, 39, 57.
Pirke Aboth, 18, 29, 75, 143, 146.
Pitcher, 281.
Plato, 63.
Plays upon words (*see Paranomasia*).
Plumptre quoted, 34, 76, 99.
Poetry, Hebrew, 3, 4, 14, 118.
Pomegranate, 326.
Poverty, 182.
Prayer, 245.
Prostitute, 37, 55, 58, 258.
Proverbs, Arabic, 54, 71, 195, 204.
— Egyptian, 73.
— English, 70, 74, 88, 93, 103, 123, 132, 165, 166, 169, 172, 175, 185, 197, 235, 257.
— German, 171.
— Indian, 95, 103, 114.
— Italian, 74, 106.
— Japanese, 117.
— Latin, 108, 266.
— Rabbinical, 105, 273.
— Scottish, 29, 75, 97, 103, 117.
— Welsh, 103.

Pruning, 318.
Ptolemy Soter, 260

Quarles, F., quoted, 281, 293.
Quince, 314, 347.

Racine quoted, 57.
Rain, 318.
Raisins, 315.
Raven, 196.
Renan quoted, 212.
Rephaim, 38, 70, 131.
Resurrection, 255, 263.
Riches, 143, 248, 254.
Riddles, 28.
Robbers, 22.
Roe, 317.
Rose of Sharon, 313.
Rossetti, C., quoted, 225, 231, 393.
Rubies, 41, 125.
Ruskin quoted, 24.

Sacrifice, 59, 106, 134, 244.
Saffron, 313.
Sages, 21.
Saints (*see* Chasidim).
Sayings of the Jewish Fathers (see *Pirke Aboth*).
Scarlet, 205.
Scottish proverbs, 29, 75, 97.
Seals, 39, 351.
Septuagint, 16, 30-2, 37, 40-3, 45-7, 50, 52-4, 60, 62, 69, 72, 74, 76, 78, 79, 81, 83, 89, 92, 98, 101, 107, 109, 121, 132, 137, 157, 162, 168, 171, 174, 175, 187, 189, 201, 231.
Serpent, 196, 270, 271.
Seven, 31.
Shakespeare quoted, 112, 116, 177, 224, 225, 235, 273.
Shanon, 313.
Sheol, 30, 37, 61, 96, 98, 175, 267, 351.
Shields, 327.
Shulammite, 343.
Shunammite, 343.
Siegfried quoted, 216, 231, 246, 254, 260, 346.
Silver, 34.
— cord, 280.
Simple, 130.
Sinner, 124.
Slaves, 106, 137, 193.
Sling, 166.
Sluggard, 86, 133, 138, 241.
Smith, W. O., quoted, 91.
Snow, 159, 164.
Solomon, 229, 281, 287, 294.
Sophocles quoted, 240.
Spices, 331.
Spider, 199.
Spikenard, 311.
Spring, 277, 317.
Stevenson, R. L., quoted, 97, 255, 260, 275.
Stiff-necked, 183.
Strack quoted, 35.
Strange woman (*see* 'Prostitute').
Suffering, problem of, 40.
Surety, 51.
Swinburne quoted, 116.
Sword-dance, 322, 343.
Syriac version of Proverbs, 120.

Tennyson quoted, 63, 263, 317.
Thalpioth, 327.
Threshing-board, 127, 297.
Tirzah, 339.
Topaz, 336.
Tower, 345.
Toy quoted, 34, 35, 38, 42, 45, 46, 49, 60, 83, 84, 99, 113, 127, 133, 139, 144, 202, 205.
Tree of life, 41.
Turtle-dove, 318.
Tyre, 21.

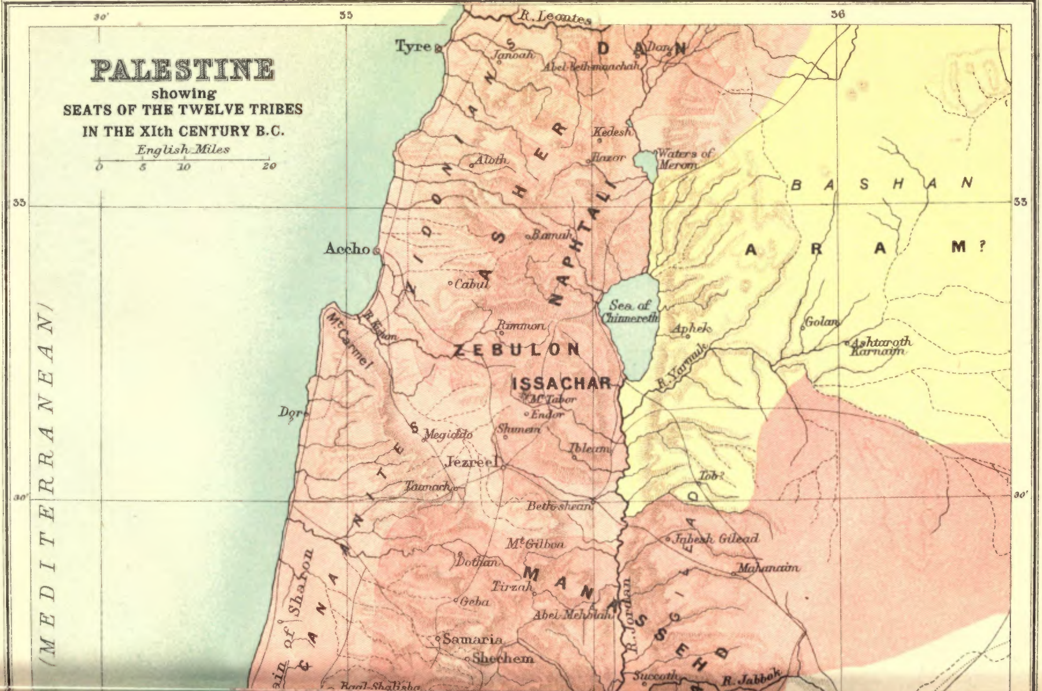
Ucal, 189.
Unguents (*see* Ointments).

Vampire, 194.
Vanity, 221.
Veil, 325, 326.
Vengeance, 162.
'Vexation of spirit,' 226.
Vinegar, 161.
Vineyard, 307.
Virtue, 82, 203.
Vows, 127, 245.
Vulgate, 53, 55, 129, 153, 166.
Vulture, 196.

Wady, 196.
Walnut, 341.
Wasf, 298, 324, 330.
Way, 146.
Weights, 77.
Wetzstein, 322, 324.
Wife, 276.
Wilde, O., *De Profundis* quoted, 230.
Wildeboer quoted, 29, 40, 1
103, 111, 117, 129, 248.
Window, 58, 278.
Wine, 68, 122, 228.
Winking, 54.
Winter, 277, 317.
Wisdom, 22, 27, 64, 66, 1
254.
— Literature, 18, 24.
— Book of, 22, 23, 38.
Wise, the, 18.
Women, 119, 130, 202, 258.
Words, non-Semitic, 288.
— power of, 74, 85, 109.
Wormwood, 48.

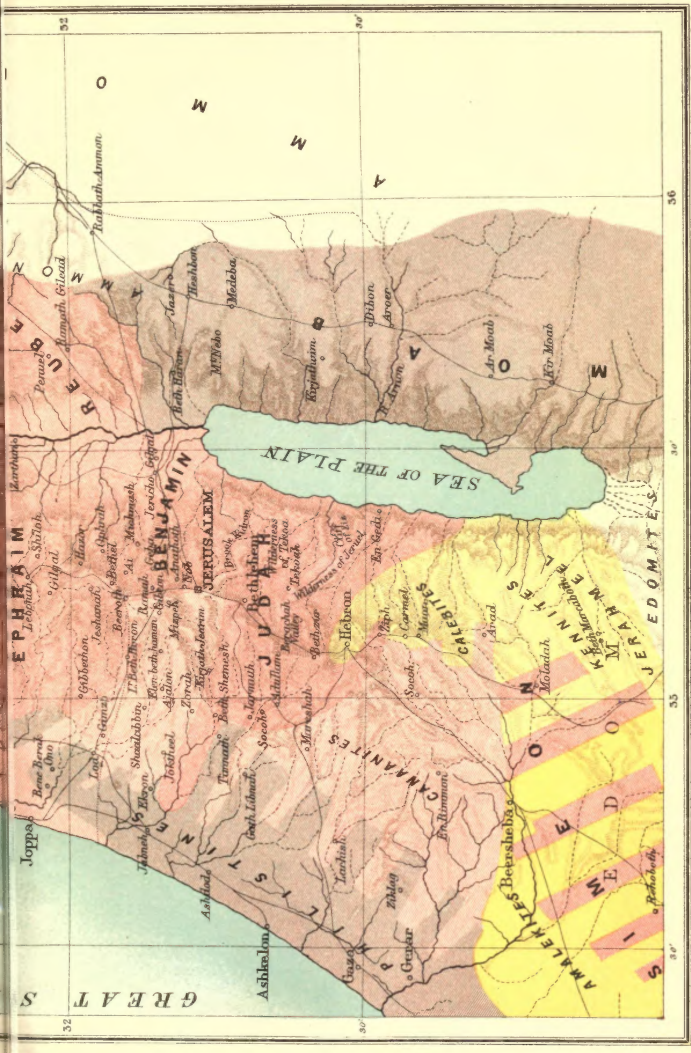
Zarephath, 339.
Zarethan, 339.
Zebra, 199.

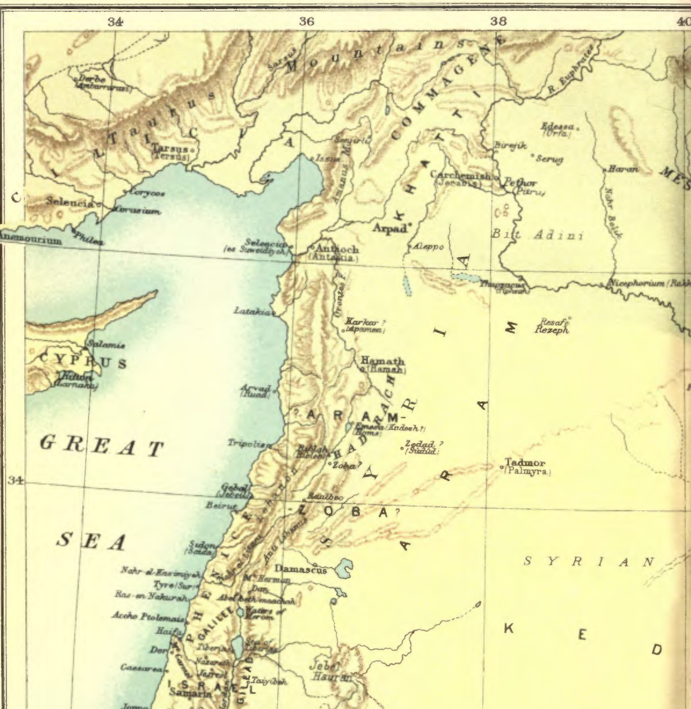
Oxford: Horace Hart, Printer to the University



PALESTINE
showing
SEATS OF THE TWELVE TRIBES
IN THE XIth CENTURY B.C.

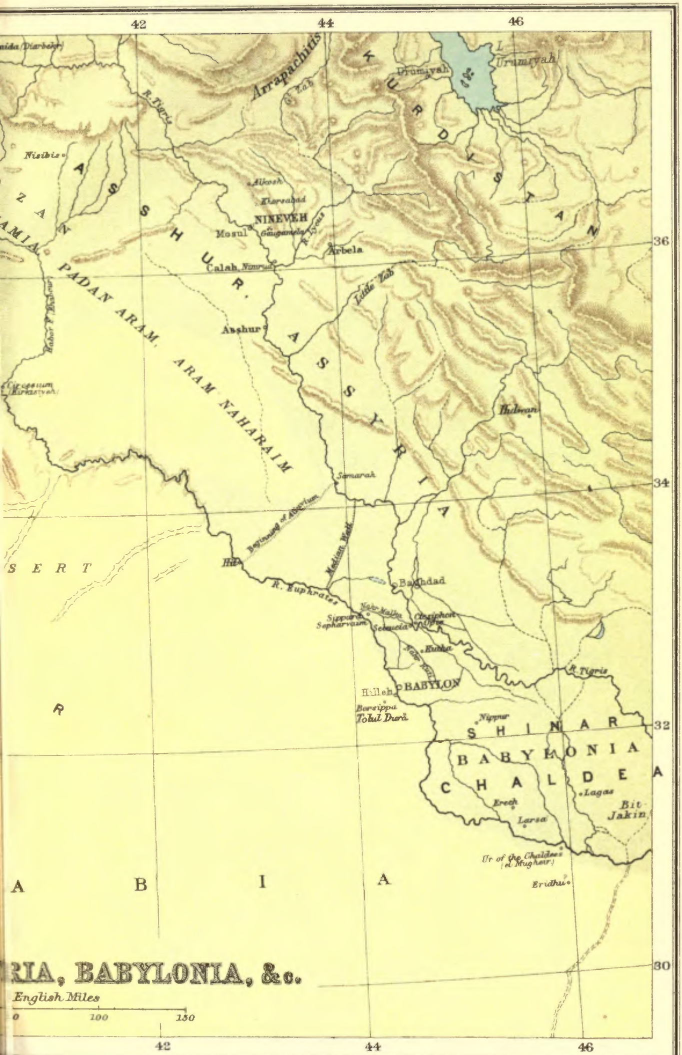
English Miles
0 5 10 20
30'
35
36
33
30'
(MEDITERRANEAN)
R. Leontes
Tyre
Janoah
DAN
Dan
Abel-Beth-maachah
Kedesh
Hazor
Waters of Merom
Aloth
ZIDONIANS
ASHER
NAPHTALI
Ramah
Accho
Cabul
Mt Carmel
R. Kishon
Rimmon
ZEBULON
ISSACHAR
Mt Tabor
Endor
Shunem
Sea of Chinnereth
Aphek
R. Yarmuk
BASHAN
ARAM ?
Golan
Ashtaroth Karnaim
Dor
Megiddo
CANAANITES
Jezreel
Ibleam
Taanach
Tob?
Beth-shean
GILEAD
Jabesh Gilead
Mahanaim
Mt Gilboa
Dothan
Tirzah
MANASSEH
Geba
Abel-Meholah
R. Jordan
Samaria
Shechem
Plain of Sharon
Baal-Shalisha
Succoth
R. Jabbok


32
30'
36
30'
35
30'
32
30'
A M M O N
R E U B E N
Rabbath Ammon
Ramoth Gilead
Penuel
Jazer
Heshbon
Medeba
Beth Haran
Mt Nebo
Kirjathaim
Dibon
Aroer
R. Arnon
Ar Moab
Kir Moab
M O A B
SEA OF THE PLAIN
Zarthan
E P H R A I M
Lebonah
Shiloh
Gilgal
Hazor
Ophrah
Bethel
Ai
Michmash
Jericho
Gilgal
Geba
Anathoth
Nob
Ramah
Gibeon
Beeroth
Jeshanah
Gibbethon
Gimzo
Lod
Ono
Bene Berak
Joppa
L. Beth horon
Elon beth hanan
Aijalon
Mizpeh
Kirjath Jearim
JERUSALEM
B E N J A M I N
Brook Kidron
Bethlehem
Wilderness of Tekoa
Tekoah
Wilderness of Jeruel
Cliff of Ziz
En Gedi
Berachah Valley
Beth zur
J U D A H
Adullam
Jarmuth
Beth Shemesh
Zorah
Shaalabbin
Jokthael
Ekron
Timnah
Socoh
Gath Libnah
Mareshah
Hebron
Ziph
Carmel
Maon
CALEBITES
Arad
Socoh
KENITES
Beth Marcaboth
JERAHMEELITES
EDOMITES
Moladah
S I M E O N
C A N A A N I T E S
En Rimmon
Lachish
Ziklag
Gerar
Gaza
Ashkelon
Ashdod
Jabneh
P H I L I S T I N E S
Beersheba
Rehoboth
AMALEKITES
E D O M
S I M E O N
G R E A T S


34
36
38
40
34
32
30
Taurus Mountains
CILICIA
COMMAGENE
KHATTI
Derbe (Antarrurust)
Tarsus (Tersus)
Corycos
Seleucia
Corasium
Anemourium
Philea
Issus
Sarrus
Sinjirli
Amanus Mts.
R. Euphrates
Edessa (Orfa)
Birejik
Serug
Haran
Nahr Balik
MES
Carchemish (Jerablis)
Pethor (Pitru)
Arpad
Aleppo
Bit Adini
Seleucia (es Sweidiyeh)
Antioch (Antakia)
Thapsacus (Dipsah)
Nicephorium (Rakk
Latakia
Orontes R.
Karkar? (Apamea)
Resafe Rezeph
Hamath (Hamah)
ARAM-ZOBA?
HAMATH
Salamis
CYPRUS
Kition (Larnaka)
Arvad (Ruad)
ARAM
ARAM-HADRACH
Emesa (Kadesh?) (Homs)
Tripolis
Riblah (Ribleh)
Zoba?
Zedad? (Sudud)
Tadmor (Palmyra)
GREAT SEA
Gebal (Jebeil)
Beirut
Baalbec
Lebanon
Anti Libanus
ARAM
SYRIA
Sidon (Saida)
Nahr el Kasimiyeh
Tyre (Sur)
Ras en Nakurah
Acco Ptolemais
Haifa
Dor
Caesarea
Joppa (Yafa)
Damascus
Mt. Hermon
Dan
Abel beth maachah
Waters of Merom
PHOENICIA
GALILEE
Sea of Tiberias
Tiberias
Nazareth
Jezreel
Carmel
ISRAEL
Samaria
Shechem
GILEAD
Taiyibeh
Jebel Hauran
Jordan
Jabbok
Succoth
Es Salt
Bethel
Mizpah
Gezer
Ekron
Jerusalem
Jericho
AMMON
Heshbon
Ashdod (Esdud)
Ashkelon (Askalan)
Gath
Bethlehem
Tekoa
Gaza (Ghuzzeh)
Lachish
Hebron
JUDAH
CANAAN
Salt Sea
MOAB
Beersheba
Rehoboth (Ruhaibeh)
Wadi Arish
Shur?
Kadesh ('Ain' Kadis)
Wilderness of Zin
Wadi el Arabah
Mount Seir
Mt. Hor
Sela? Petra
EDOM
Ezion Geber
Elath (Akabah)
SYRIAN
KEDAR
AR
SYRIA, AS
0

The Edinburgh Geographical Institute

T. C. & E. C.



RIA, BABYLONIA, &c.

42
44
46
36
34
32
30
aida (Diarbekr)
R. Tigris
Arrapachitis
Gt. Zab
K U R D I S T A N
Urumiyah
L. Urumiyah
Nisibis
Z A N
AMIA
A S S H U R.
Alkosh
Khorsabad
NINEVEH
Mosul
Gaugamela
R. Gomel
Arbela
Calah, Nimrud
Little Zab
PADAN ARAM, ARAM NAHARAIM
Habor R. Khabour
Asshur
A S S Y R I A
Circesium (Kirkasiyeh)
Hulwan
Samarah
Beginning of Alluvium
Median Wall
S E R T
Hit
R. Euphrates
Baghdad
Nahr Malka
Sippara
Sepharvaim
Seleucia
Ctesiphon
Opis
Cutha
Nahr Kutha
R. Tigris
Hilleh
BABYLON
Borsippa
Tolul Durâ
Nippur
S H I N A R
B A B Y L O N I A
C H A L D E A
Erech
Larsa
Lagas
Bit-Jakin
Ur of the Chaldees (el Mughair)
Eridhu
R
A B I A
English Miles
0
100
150

Copyright – John Bartholomew & Co.

nburgh

The Century Bible
A MODERN COMMENTARY

Isaiah
I—XXXIX

INTRODUCTION
REVISED VERSION WITH NOTES
ILLUSTRATIONS

EDITED BY THE REV.
OWEN C. WHITEHOUSE, M.A., D.D.

VOL. I

LONDON
THE CAXTON PUBLISHING COMPANY
CLUN HOUSE, SURREY STREET, W.C.

The Revised Version is printed by permission of the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge

OXFORD
HORACE HART, PRINTER TO THE UNIVERSITY

CONTENTS

PAGE

INTRODUCTION 3

§ 1. Period of Isaiah's activity 3

§ 2. External History of Western Asia and Israel, 750–700 B. C. 8

§ 3. Internal social and religious condition of Israel, 750–700 B. C. 41

§ 4. Theology of Isaiah 49

§ 5. Critical problems of Isaiah 63

§ 6. Biography, style of Isaiah, and probable order of his oracles 71

§ 7. Recent important commentaries and other aids 75

APPENDIX I. ASSYRIAN EPONYM CANON 79

APPENDIX II. HEBREW CHRONOLOGY WITH TABLE . 81

TEXT OF THE REVISED VERSION WITH ANNOTATIONS . 85

EXCURSUS. TRANSLATION OF SENNACHERIB'S PRISM INSCRIPTION (PALESTINIAN CAMPAIGN) 370

ADDENDA 372

INDEX 373

PLATES

SIDON (in colour) (Photochr. Co.) 32

SHECHEM AND MOUNT GERIZIM (Photochr. Co.) . . 96

SILA (PETRA) (from a drawing by D. Roberts, R.A.) . 160

LAND OF ARARAT 224

ASSYRIAN KING BESIEGING CASTLE 288

MAPS OF (1) SYRIA, ASSYRIA, BABYLONIA, ETC.; (2) PALESTINE, SHOWING SEATS OF THE TWELVE TRIBES IN THE ELEVENTH CENTURY B.C.

THE BOOK OF THE PROPHET

ISAIAH

INTRODUCTION

prophets: - [illegible] of the covenant
- disturbers of Israel
- [illegible] spokesman of God.

classical prophecy: - what is distinctive of Israelite prophets.
- teaching of prophetic word.
- special vocation of Yahweh - plays an important role in the
- literature of their prophecy

Ezekiel: - man of 2 souls.
priest & prophet
preacher & writer
herald of disaster & salvation

Isaiah: - sections not attributed to 1st
Isaiah: -
chp 24:-27 → 39-
2 Kgs etc.

A. 1-12 - 742 - 732.
period from death of Uzziah to the Syro Israelite alliance.
Uzziah's death impact on people. - son weak → Assyrian threatening.
- call of Isaiah as King [illegible] the [illegible].
Is. called to proclaim Y. and as a people whose heart is insensitive.
- Y. comes to judge & purify his people.

THE PROPHECIES OF ISAIAH

INTRODUCTION

§. 1. THE PERIOD OF ISAIAH'S ACTIVITY.

THE eighth century B.C. was the period of the greatest external and internal change that Israel had witnessed since the people had settled within the borders of Canaan. It is true that the latter half of the preceding century (the ninth) had brought great humiliations upon Israel at the hands of his energetic northern rival Syria (called Aram by the Semites). This northern kingdom had been previously held in check by the powerful dynasty of Omri, as well as by the reawakened military power of Assyria under Shalmaneser II in 854 B.C. But it cannot be asserted that Syria was in any true sense a factor of permanent military importance. Like Israel, it was only able to make a considerable impression on surrounding kingdoms so long as Assyria remained dormant. Thus when Rammân-nirâri III[1], towards the close of the ninth century, revived the military power of Assyria, he inflicted an overwhelming defeat on Aram (Syria) from which it never fully recovered (circ. 803 B.C.). He is, in fact, the 'deliverer' of King Jehoahaz from Hazael to which 2 Kings xiii. 5 refers. Assyria, however, after this brief period of revived energy, subsided into another period of military quiescence.

---

[1] The name is read by Winckler (*KAT.*^{3}, p. 46) Adad-nirari. The cuneiform sign with the syllabic value *im* may be read, as an ideogram, either as Rammân, Bir, or Hadad (Adad). See Delitzsch, *Assyrische Lesestücke*^{3}, *Schrifttafel*, No. 225.

During this interval of temporary decline of Assyrian power, covering the earlier half of the eighth century, both Israel under Jeroboam II and Judah under Uzziah (Azariah) grew in strength and importance. The confines of the former were considerably extended (2 Kings xiv. 25, 28) towards the north, while in the south Jeroboam's contemporary, Uzziah, greatly strengthened Judah's military position. This we learn from the accounts preserved in 'Chronicles,' which may be regarded as in the main trustworthy so far as the political administration is concerned [1]. But this extension of influence was after all a mushroom growth, and any revival of Assyrian power on the Tigris threatened it with speedy destruction. This revival came in the latter part of the eighth century under Tiglath-Pileser III (745-727), called by the Babylonians Pûlu (whence the Pul of Scripture, an alternative name of this king, 2 Kings xv. 19, cf. verse 29 and chap. xvi. 7). The advent of this new Assyrian monarch to the throne brought with it an epoch-making change in the history of Israel both internal and external. Tiglath-Pileser (in Assyr. *Tuklat-abal-išarra*) was succeeded after the short reign of Shalmaneser IV (Assyr. *Šulmanu-ašaridu*) by Sargon II (*Šarru-kînu*), who reigned from 722 to 705 B.C. [2]; and Sennacherib, who succeeded in 705 B.C., continued the policy of military conquest inaugurated by Tiglath-Pileser. In fact, from the accession of Tiglath-Pileser till the close of the reign of Ašurbanipal, in the middle of the following century, Assyria continued its victorious course as an aggressive military state. At the close of the eighth century the Assyrian empire extended to the Persian Gulf and the shores of the Araxes on the east; and to Edom, Gaza,

---

[1] For further details see the author's article 'Uzziah' in Hastings' *DB*.

[2] These dates are absolutely assured on the ground of the official lists of Assyrian eponyms. See Appendix I at the end of this Introduction.

Cyprus and Cilicia on the west. In the reign of Ašurbanipal it extended its confines to Elam on the east and to Egypt on the west[1]. Then it suddenly declined through internal exhaustion, and was supplanted by the new Babylonian empire, which in its turn rapidly succumbed, in less than a century from its rise, to the arms of the Persian Cyrus (538 B.C.).

During the period of Assyrian domination with which we are now more immediately concerned, there was only one power which was in any degree able to oppose this advancing tide of conquest, namely Egypt. Egypt on the one side, and Babylonia or Assyria on the other, might be called the two 'great powers' of Western Asian politics during the millennium which intervened between the time of Thothmes III and that of Pharaoh Hophra (1600–570 B.C.). Both the empire on the Nile and that on the Euphrates possessed a civilization of vast antiquity. Babylonia has clay documents either still reposing in its 'tells' (i.e. mounds of ruins), or scattered among the museums of Europe and America, which reach back to the fifth millennium B.C. Egypt has monuments whose antiquity is almost as remote.

But in the middle of the eighth century, when Isaiah lived, the twenty-fourth dynasty was reigning in Egypt, and her military power was weak through internal divisions and therefore unable to resist the progress of the Assyrian arms. It was not till the close of the century, about 708 B.C.[2], when the twenty-fifth dynasty, which was Ethiopian, succeeded, that fresh energy was infused into Egypt's foreign policy. In the seventh century King Taharḳo (or Tirhaḳah) was able to confront the Assyrian colossus and inspire the Palestinian princes, who had had bitter experience of Egypt's weakness and procrastination, with stronger and better-founded hopes of maintaining their independence (691 B.C.).

---

[1] See the useful coloured map appended to Schrader's *Keilinschriftliche Bibliothek*, vol. ii.

[2] This is the date given by Max Müller, followed by most recent historians, as compared with that of earlier authorities who placed the advent of the twenty-fifth dynasty about 730 B.C.

For it must be remembered that all the princes of the Palestinian borders, from Tyre in the north to Moab and Judah in the south, played quite a subordinate part in this conflict of races and rulers. Menaḥem, Hoshea, Aḥaz, and Hezekiah sustained the ignoble rôle of dependent or even vassal kings, seeking to curry favour either with the Assyrian or Egyptian monarch, just as the expediency of the moment dictated. Probably no other rôle was possible for princes whose tenure of authority was brief and precarious, subject to the good pleasure of one or other of these two great powers, while the domain of any one of these princes hardly exceeded in size that of the largest among the English counties. Hoshea was but a puppet placed on the throne of Samaria by Tiglath-Pileser, and did his best to please Assyria and Egypt at the same time or by turns (Hos. v. 13, vii. 11, xi. 1).

Thus the position held by even the most powerful of the Palestinian kings somewhat resembled that of the Amir of Afghanistan, graphically described by the late Lord Lytton as 'an earthen pipkin between two iron pots,' viz. the English power in India on the one side and the Russian in Central Asia on the other. And the analogy holds yet further. Palestine possessed as great a strategic importance *then* as Afghanistan holds now. Palestine was the only well-watered and therefore practical highway and caravan track between north or north-east and south or south-west. Now Egypt was invulnerable upon the eastern border save along the very narrow frontier now traversed by the Suez Canal and protected in ancient times by a series of fortresses. It could therefore only be attacked by the northern power, Assyria, by way of Palestine. For in those days the sea was deemed a treacherous element, and the Phoenicians were the only maritime race whose vessels were at the service of a foreign power[1]. Therefore, against Egypt, Palestine furnished the natural route for the advance of the Assyrian army.

Thus Egypt could only remain secure against Assyrian invasion when such towns as Lachish, Ashḳelon, Jerusalem, Gaza, Eḳron, Ashdod, and Samaria were not under the control of Assyria, and their rulers were friendly to the Egyptian power. Accordingly Palestine possessed an unrivalled strategic importance in Western Asia (see article 'War' in *Enc. Bibl.* § 1). The possession of such a land was coveted by the north-eastern or Assyrian power in Western Asia and by Egypt in North-Eastern Africa, not only because its soil was fertile (Gen. xiii. 10, xlix. 11 foll., 20, 22, 25 foll.; Exod. iii. 17; Num. xiii. 23, 27; Deut. i. 25, viii. 7, &c.), but also because it had considerable military value.

The prophetic ministry of Isaiah nearly covers the latter half of the eighth century, the period of Assyrian military enterprise and aggrandisement to which we referred on a previous page. The shocks of collision between the Assyrian power and the western states and kingdoms, Syrian and Palestinian, which had begun in the northern or Syrian region under Shalmaneser II and Rammân-nirâri III in the preceding century, were continued with greater vigour and persistence under Tiglath-Pileser III and his successors. The expeditions of the Assyrian armies were now carried further to the south. Not only the northern kingdom of Israel, but also the southern kingdom, as well as the Philistine towns, were compelled to feel the heavy hand of the conqueror, until nearly all these states and kingdoms, from the Hittites in the north to the Hebrews and Philistines in the south, were pounded to fragments by the successive blows of Assyrian attack. To most of these in succession Assyria became the 'mace of Divine wrath' (Isa. x. 5). Their lands were ravaged, their cities destroyed, and their populations deported to the east, no unfamiliar spectacle in ancient Semitic, and more especially in Assyrian, warfare.

---

[1] We know from the monuments that Sennacherib made use of Phoenician vessels, just as Xerxes did in the fifth century in his wars against the Hellenes.

We shall presently notice the profound influence which these events produced on Isaiah's mind and on those of the earlier and contemporary prophets, Amos, Hosea, and Micah. The Divine significance of these events is duly set forth and interpreted in their oracles recorded in the O. T. In order that the oracles of Isaiah may be better understood and appreciated, it will be necessary to trace in further detail (1) the external events in the politics of Western Asia and Israel in their mutual interrelations, (2) the internal social and religious condition of Israel during the latter half of the eighth century.

§ 2. EXTERNAL HISTORY OF WESTERN ASIA AND ISRAEL IN THEIR MUTUAL INTERRELATIONS 750–700 B.C.

Fortunately we possess ampler materials for the exposition of our subject than biblical scholars possessed more than sixty years ago, when Ewald and Delitzsch [1] in Germany and Henderson in England were writing their commentaries on the prophets. The monuments and tablets inscribed with cuneiform signs which have been discovered by Botta, Layard, and Rassam at Kujundshik, Khorsabad, and Nimrûd between 1840 and 1854, now stored in the Louvre and British Museum, have been read, interpreted, and explained by a succession of scholars, and have shed a flood of welcome light on the age in which Isaiah lived and worked [2]. We are therefore now in a far better position to understand the oracles of Isaiah and his contemporary prophets than was possible half a century ago.

---

[1] Prof. Franz Delitzsch, the veteran Evangelical Professor of Leipzig, lived to perfect his work. Thus in the 3rd edition of his commentary on Isaiah (in German, 1879), and still more in the 4th (1889), the results of Assyriology communicated by his distinguished son, Prof. Friedrich Delitzsch, were incorporated.

[2] All the annals of Assyrian kings relating to this period will be found transcribed from the cuneiform and translated

The tablets recording the campaigns of Tiglath-Pileser III have unfortunately been grievously mutilated. They were used as building material by a later Assyrian monarch, Esar-haddon, who reigned in the following century. These tablets of his predecessor, Tiglath-Pileser, he removed from that monarch's palace on the south-east platform of Nimrûd (the ancient Kalaḥ), 'caused the inscriptions with which they were covered to be partially chiselled away, and employed the plates themselves in building his own south-west palace[1].' Notwithstanding these defects it is possible to obtain a fairly distinct impression of the military expeditions of this great warrior in the western regions and in something approximating chronological order, with the aid of the 'eponym lists' and 'tables of rulers[2].'

Tiglath-Pileser's operations in the west began about 742 B.C. In 740 he captured Arpad after a two years' siege and made Rezin of Damascus (called in the inscriptions Raṣunnu) and Hiram, King of Tyre, tributary. In the year 738 he conquered a certain Azrijau (Azariah) King of Jaudi, who was the head of a coalition of nineteen northern states against the Assyrian king. It was formerly supposed with much apparent probability that this king was Uzziah (who was also called Azariah) of Judah, and this view was sustained by the great authority of Professor Schrader[3], but, since Dr. Schrader's arguments were published, the important discovery of the Senjirli

---

in Schrader's *Keilinschriftliche Bibliothek* (*KIB.*), vol. ii. pp. 1–119, an invaluable storehouse of *contemporary* illustrative material.

[1] Schrader, *COT.*, i. p. 234.

[2] *COT.*, vol. ii. pp. 178 foll., cf. p. 168 foll. The name of the monarch called in *COT.* Tiglath-Pileser II is now designated as Tiglath-Pileser III.

[3] *COT.*, vol. i. p. 208 foll.

inscriptions has revealed the existence of a northern land called Jâdi (or Jaudi), where a language much resembling Hebrew was spoken. The close contiguity of this country to the nineteen districts mentioned in the mutilated inscriptions of Tiglath-Pileser renders it far more probable that this is the land whose king is meant rather than that of so distant a country as Judah[1]. The effect of this discovery has been to place the death-year of Uzziah (Isa. vi. 1) earlier in the difficult chronology of this period. This tends in a certain degree to simplify its problems.

In the year 738 the pressure exercised by the Assyrian power upon the northern states, including Tyre, began to be felt in Israel. Menaḥem followed the ignoble precedent set by Jehu just one century earlier at the opening of his reign[2] (842 B.C.), and purchased exemption from molestation by paying the enormous tribute of 1,000 silver talents, or about £400,000 (2 Kings xv. 19, 20). To this Tiglath-Pileser III makes reference in his annals, which thereby confirms the statement of Scripture (*COT.*, i. p. 215; *KIB.*, ii. p. 30). Hiram (Hirumu) King of Tyre and Rezin of Damascus are mentioned as tributaries in the same list. This pusillanimous policy of Menaḥem was followed by his son Peḳaḥiah, and cost him his life. An insurrectionary movement, headed by Peḳaḥ, was directed against this abject vassallage to Assyria, and Peḳaḥiah became its victim. We cannot but sympathize with the patriotic energy of Peḳaḥ, who endeavoured to put an end to a policy which was as fatal as it was timid. Not much is said about him in the narrative of 2 Kings, and what is said is of an unfavourable character, since the moral estimates about Israelite kings are all conceived from the standpoint of the later Deuteronomic legalism which marked the close of the seventh century. This legislation regarded Jerusalem as the only lawful place of worship and the High Places as contrary to God's enactment. In 2 Kings xv. 37, xvi. 5 we read that Pekaḥ formed an alliance with Rezin of Damascus. The reason for this step is perfectly clear and intelligible, and shows sound statesmanship. If a strong confederacy of Palestinian states could have been organized against Assyrian aggression it is quite possible that the untoward events of the following years might have been averted. Such a strong combination was all the more needed, because Egypt at that time (under the twenty-fourth dynasty) was disunited and weak, and the Palestinian kingdoms and states were consequently obliged to depend on their own resources in confronting Assyrian aggression. Philistia appears to have joined the 'Bund,' and possibly Edom; but Jotham and his successor Aḥaz refused to join the confederacy. The biblical record is silent respecting the causes or motives which led up to the Syro-Ephraimite war, but some such series of circumstances and political considerations must have co-operated in bringing about this coalition against the kingdom of Judah. The political conditions were analogous to those which led up to the coalition of Ahab and Ben-hadad (Hadadezer) King of Syria against Shalmaneser II, which terminated in the disastrous battle of Ḳarḳar (854 B.C.)[1] and issued in a war between the allies in which Aḥab lost his life at Ramoth-Gilead. Here again the data of the cuneiform inscriptions enable us to supply the missing links of historical causation that render the sequence of recorded events in the biblical narrative more intelligible.

---

[1] These arguments against the earlier view were first brought forward by Dr. Hugo Winckler in a masterly essay in his *Alttestamentliche Forschungen*, i. (1893), pp. 1–23. For further details see the article 'Uzziah' by the present writer in Hastings' *DB.*

[2] No reference is made to this in Scripture, but the fact is definitely recorded in the Black Obelisk of Shalmaneser II.

---

[1] See Hastings' *DB.* article 'Aḥab' and Schrader's *COT.*, i. pp. 183–90, where the monolith inscription of Shalmaneser II is cited and interpreted. A more correct version will be found complete in Schrader's *KIB.*, i. pp. 151–74.

Jotham and his successor Aḥaz had fallen under the spell of this evil tradition of national policy, inaugurated by Jehu and continued by Menaḫem, compliance with Assyria. We find a decisive indication of this in the inscriptions of Tiglath-Pileser. In a list of vassal princes who paid tribute to Tiglath-Pileser about this time, inscribed on a clay tablet (ii. Rawl. 67, line 61), we find mention of Mitinti of Ashkelon, Joaḥaz of Judah[1], and Kosmelech of Edom. Joaḥaz is evidently the longer form of Aḥaz, in which the prefix, a shorter form for the name of the deity Jahu (for Yahweh) or Jah (cf. Aha*ziah*), was omitted by the Jews in later days on account of the notorious idolatry of the king who bore the sacred name of their God (2 Kings xvi. 10–18). This identification is, moreover, rendered absolutely certain by the geographical contiguity of Philistia (Ashḳelon) on the one side, and of Edom on the other[2].

Aḥaz evidently had a secret understanding with Tiglath-Pileser, or was meditating such a policy at the moment when the prophet Isaiah met him at the conduit of the upper pool (chap. vii). This enables us to understand the underlying reserve with which he met the prophet's admonitions. Probably Tiglath-Pileser had been already informed by secret messengers of the serious predicament in which the King of Judah found himself. It is even possible that the king's royal as well as temple treasures had been already despoiled in the payment of tribute to the Assyrian king (2 Kings xvi. 8 foll.). From the statements of Scripture we gather that the message to Tiglath-Pileser produced an immediate effect. The arms of Assyria were turned upon the adversaries of Aḥaz. Tiglath-Pileser was the 'Saviour' of Aḥaz in precisely the same way as Rammân-nirâri III had been to Jehoaḥaz at the close of the preceding century (2 Kings xiii. 5; cf. § 1).

---

[1] In the original: Ja-u-ḫa-zi (*mâtu*) Ja-u-da-ai. With this statement in the clay document cf. 2 Kings xvi. 8 foll.

[2] *COT.*, i. p. 258 foll.; *KIB.*, ii. p. 20.

It is by no means clear what was the precise sequence of Tiglath-Pileser's operations in these years 734–732 B.C. If we follow the indications given in one of the eponym lists, viz. the List of Governors, which places a campaign against Philistia in 734 B.C., we may be following the true chronological order [1]. In the following years Tiglath-Pileser turned his arms against Rezin of Damascus. This may have been the actual course of events, and it seems to be definitely suggested by the List of Governors. It is difficult, however, to understand how operations against Philistia, in which Israel must be included, could have been securely undertaken while Rezin of Damascus, a powerful, unvanquished adversary, was strongly posted in the rear, for the most practicable route for attacking Southern Palestine lay through Syria [2]. The exact order of events must remain obscure for the present, since the Assyrian documents are so fragmentary and mutilated. We gather, however, that Gaza was one of the chief objects of Assyrian attack, since it was the chief Philistine ally of Rezin. On the approach of Tiglath-Pileser's armies its king, Ḥanno (*Ḥanunu*), fled to North Arabia near Edom, a region which the recent researches of Glaser, Hommel, and Winckler have enabled us to identify. It is the land Muṣri (or *Muṣrân*), a region frequently confused with Egypt in the biblical records. In the same year, and probably before these operations were undertaken against Ḥanno, Tiglath-Pileser invaded the northern kingdom of Israel ruled by Peḳaḥ. The passage in which these military achievements are recorded is sadly mutilated, especially in the portion that relates to Israel[1], which reads in translation thus: 'The town Gil[ead] . . . Abel [Maacha] which are above the land Beth Omri (Samaria) . . . the broad I turned in its en[tire extent] into the territory of Assyria and placed my [officers] as viceroys over them.' Further on in the same inscription (lines 28 foll.) we read: 'The land Beth-Omri the whole of its inhabitants together with their property I deported to Assyria, Peḳaḥ their king I slew, Hoshea (Ausi) I appointed to rule over them.' The once prosperous and powerful kingdom of Northern Israel was thus shorn of the northern frontier districts of Zebulon, Asher, and Naphtali[2], while the eastern transjordanic territories were also taken away. Moreover, the inhabitants of these border provinces were deported to Assyria, while Assyrian inhabitants were brought over as settlers to take their place, in accordance with a practice which the Assyrians frequently adopted in conquered territories[3].

---

[1] The succession of events recorded is as follows (cf. *COT.*, ii. p. 194 foll.):—

734. Bêl-dan-ilu of Kalaḥ . . . to the land Pilista (Philistia).
733. Ašur-danin-ani of Mazamua . . . to the land Damascus.
732. Nabû-bel-uṣur of Si'mê . . . to the land Damascus.

[2] See Winckler in Schrader, *KAT.*^{3}, p. 56 foll. and footnote 4. It may be true, as Winckler suggests, that Rezin avoided a collision with Tiglath-Pileser. Moreover, it may have been owing to the despairing and urgent appeal of Aḥaz that the Assyrian king directed his forces at once to Palestine for his relief. It is quite possible that Rezin detached some portion of his forces for the defence of his allies in Philistia and Northern Israel.

These events of the years 734-2 B. C. seem to have produced an indelible impression on the mind of Isaiah. He may indeed have beheld with his own eyes those advancing hosts of Assyrian warriors, whom the inhabitants of Canaan now beheld for the first time and were destined to behold again not once nor twice before the century closed. We refer to the vivid description contained in Isa. v. 26-30, probably composed some eight years later.

---

[1] iii. Rawl. 10. 2, lines 17 foll.; Schrader, *KIB.*, ii. p. 30 foll.

[2] Respecting the towns of Iyyôn, Abel bêth Ma'achah, &c., mentioned in 2 Kings xv. 29, see Hastings' *DB. sub voce* Peḳaḥ, p. 737 footnote.

[3] To this the Assyrian inscriptions bear witness, Schrader, *COT.*, p. 268 foll.

'Behold, hastily, swiftly he cometh. There is none that is weary or stumbleth. He stumbleth not nor sleepeth. The girdle of his loins is never loosed, nor the thong of his sandals rent—whose arrows are sharp, and all his bows bent, whose horses' hoofs are accounted as flint, and his wheels like a whirlwind. His roar is like that of a lioness; he roareth like the young lions, moaning and catching the prey, and carrying it off safe, and there is none to rescue. And at that time there is moaning over it like the moaning of the sea; and if we look to the earth, behold oppressive darkness!'

This catastrophe was evidently foreseen by the prophet in the earlier days when Aḥaz was not yet rid of his foes. In chap. viii. 7 foll., which may probably be dated 734 B.C., he compares the Assyrian invasion to an overwhelming flood:

'Behold, Yahweh bringeth up against them [i.e. Judah's enemies Syria and Ephraim] the waters of the river [i.e. the Euphrates], mighty and full, and it shall mount up over all its channels, and go over all its banks, and pass along into Judah streaming and flowing over, reaching up to the neck.'

The last phase in this prophecy, viz. the flood at length sweeping over Judah, did not attain fulfilment till the close of the century, thirty years afterwards.

From the inscriptions of Tiglath-Pileser quoted above we learn that Peḳaḥ was slain and Hoshea was placed as the nominee of Assyria on the throne of Samaria. Thus another Israelite king disappears 'like a chip on the water's surface' (Hos. x. 7). During the years that followed (733 and 732 B.C.) Syria, now bereft of allies and isolated, felt the heavy hand of Assyria, and Rezin suffered the same fate as his Ephraimite contemporary Peḳaḥ.

Tiglath-Pileser died in 727 B.C. During his lifetime King Hoshea regularly paid tribute as faithful nominee and vassal king to his suzerain; but after 727 B.C. a change of policy ensued. The accession of the new monarch Shalmaneser IV (*Šulmânu-ašaridu* in the Assyrian form of this name) seemed to open up the prospect of a breathing space for the Palestinian kingdoms. Probably there was a strong party in Samaria which endeavoured to force Hoshea's hand into an active policy of resistance to Assyria, like that of Peḳaḥ, for which the opportunity seemed to be favourable. Meanwhile Hoshea's contemporary Aḥaz had good reason to be grateful to Assyria for the timely succour rendered in his time of need, and found it to be to his interest to remain an obedient vassal under the aegis of his powerful patron's protection against future attacks from his former foes. But while Judah played this safe but ignoble rôle of subservience, his more enterprising neighbour, now (726 B.C.) that Assyria's great warrior-king was dead, began to adopt a new policy. Ephraim was now beginning to recover from the disasters which overtook Northern Israel from the arms of Tiglath-Pileser eight years previously. Isaiah in a beautiful oracle (ix. 7—x. 4; verses 25-30) composed about 726 B.C. describes the rising spirit of confident self-assertion which prevailed in Ephraim at this time: so that in pride they said, 'Bricks have fallen, yet will we build with hewn stone; sycomores have been hewn down, but cedars we will put in their place.' Yahweh, however, now stirs up the very foes that formerly beleaguered Mount Zion[1] against Ephraim. Ephraim's former allies now become her enemies. Isaiah says nothing about Assyria. Perhaps he shared the view which prevailed among the Palestinian states at that time, following immediately after the death of Tiglath-Pileser, that nothing was at the moment to be feared from the arms of Assyria. But the conclusion of this wonderful poem (verses 26-29 quoted above) warrants the belief that the prophet actually foresaw that eventually Assyrian armies would be set in motion against Northern Israel and bring about the final catastrophe.

---

[1] It is only by following the LXX that the passage becomes intelligible. The Massoretic reading 'foes *of Rezin*' in ix. 10 introduces utter confusion, from which Duhm and Marti are unable to rid themselves. See commentary on the text.

These concluding lines of Isaiah's prophecy were destined to receive speedy fulfilment. Under the circumstances of reviving national confidence and prosperity and Assyria's temporary quiescence Hoshea began to pursue in secret the policy of resistance to Assyrian domination. Egypt, still under the twenty-fourth dynasty, remained weak and divided. Negotiations, however, were opened with Egypt, as the oracles of Hosea the contemporary prophet of Ephraim clearly testify[1], and also with another kingdom lying to the south and closely adjoining Egypt, whose name in Assyrian (Muṣri) is frequently confused in the biblical records with the very similar Semitic name for Egypt itself (Miṣr, in Assyr. Miṣri).

---

[1] The vacillating policy of King Hoshea, who played a double part with Assyria and Egypt, is compared to the flitting to and fro of a 'silly dove' (Hos. v. 13, vii. 11, xi. 1). It is impossible, however, any longer to identify the 'Sô (which ought to be pronounced Sĕvĕ) King of Egypt' with Sabako or Shabaka of Egypt who inaugurated the twenty-fifth dynasty. For the commencement of the reign of Shabaka (called *Shabakû* on the Rassam cyl. (R^m) of Ašurbanipal) cannot be placed earlier than about 708 B. C. (Max Müller). The date assigned in Meyer's *History of Egypt* (circ. 728 B. C.) is certainly too early, though I adhered to it six years ago (in article 'Hoshea' and also 'Peḳah' in Hastings' *DB.*). Moreover, Sô is not an Egyptian potentate at all, but must be identified with a King Sib'i, a military officer (Tartan) of the land Muṣri in Northern Arabia (near Edom), to whom Sargon in his Khorsabad inscription, line 25, alludes. Both Winckler and Hommel, however, make deductions from their discovery of this new North Arabian land which I am not prepared to accept with the complaisance which Guthe (*Gesch. des V. Isr.*, p. 192) and Cheyne (article 'Mizraim' in *Enc. Bibl.*) accord to them. It is assumed that there has been throughout Hebrew literature a widespread confusion between this North Arabian land Muṣri (Hommel's Moṣar) and Miṣraim (Egypt), and this involves the narratives of Israel's stay in and departure from Egypt. Cheyne follows Winckler (*Enc. Bibl.* 'Exodus') in transferring the scene to the newly-discovered North Arabian region. See also Winckler in *KAT.*^{3}, i. pp. 146 foll.; Hommel, *Aufsätze u. Abhandlungen*, iii. 1 (1901), pp. 303-312. But in assuming such a wholesale confusion throughout biblical literature we tend to lose sight of historic realities and perspectives. The Arabian land (mât) Muṣri found in Tiglath-Pileser's and

How long the process of double dealing with both Assyria and Egypt (as well as Northern Arabia) continued it is impossible to decide. Probably the negotiations carried on by Hoshea with his southern and south-western allies were kept secret from the Assyrian court until the right moment arrived for throwing off all disguise. The actual situation was disclosed by the cessation of payment of the annual tribute paid by Ephraim to Assyria. In the summer of 724 B.C. the forces of Shalmaneser were directed against Samaria, and the city became closely invested by the Assyrian armies.

These events were watched with anxious interest by two contemporary prophets. One of them was Hosea of the northern kingdom and the other was Isaiah of Judah. There is profound pathos in the agonizing appeals which the former prophet places in the lips of Yahweh as He contemplates the swiftly advancing ruin which threatened His faithless spouse, Ephraim: 'How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? How shall I desert thee, Israel? How shall I make thee like Admah? How shall I set thee as Zeboim? My heart is turned within me, my compassions are kindled together.' But Israel's doom cannot be averted. 'The iniquity of Ephraim is bound up. His sin is laid in

---

Sargon's inscriptions (and also in the Minaean or old Arabic) possessed but secondary importance, while Egypt continued to play a leading rôle in West-Asian politics even in the days of her temporary decadence. This should give us pause in substituting the one for the other closely similar name in the O. T. records. Nevertheless Winckler's and Hommel's discovery throws much needed light on Hagar's origin (Gen. xvi, xxi) and on Gen. xx. Also in Ps. lx. 11 (an old Davidic fragment) Winckler is probably right in reading 'Who hath brought me to Muṣr, who hath led me to Edom?' See further notes on xx. 5 and xxx. 4, footnote.

store . . . Samaria shall bear her guilt because she hath rebelled against her God: they shall fall by the sword; their infants shall be dashed in pieces' (Hos. xi. 7, xiii. 12, xiv. 1). The prophet of the southern kingdom stood at a greater distance from the scene of events than Hosea, and the strain of his oracle is more measured (Isa. xxviii. 1 foll.):—'Woe to the crown of pride of the drunkards of Ephraim, and to the fading flower of his glorious beauty, which is on the summit of the fertile valley of them that are overcome with wine. Behold, the Lord hath a mighty and strong one; as a tempest of hail, a destroying storm, a tempest of mighty waters overflowing, doth He violently cast down to the earth. The crown of pride of the drunkards of Ephraim shall be trodden under foot.'

For two years the siege was continued with all its unspeakable horrors of slaughter, disease, and privation: of captives impaled on stakes around the encircling walls, in presence of the beleaguered inhabitants—scenes vividly portrayed in the Nimrûd gallery of the British Museum (see *Enc. Bibl.*, article 'Siege'). Meanwhile no help came from either Egypt or Northern Arabia. Gaza and Ashdod were in turn to suffer in coming years a like disillusionment. Egypt's strength was to 'sit still' (Rahab 'sit-still') in the presence of Assyrian oppression. The siege was pressed on with vigour by a new Assyrian general of much energy, who became Shalmaneser's successor, viz. Sargon (Šarru-kînu) II. The end came at last, recorded in two lines of his great Khorsabad inscription (23, 24): 'Samaria I besieged, I captured; 27,290 of her inhabitants I carried away; fifty chariots I collected from their midst. The rest of their property I caused to be taken (?). My viceroy I placed over them and imposed the tribute of the previous kings.'

Here the brilliant national history of the northern kingdom closes. It is rarely that we meet with an ending so tragic and abrupt. From 2 Kings xvii. 6 we learn that the inhabitants were transported to districts in or near Babylonia, while Babylonian inhabitants were settled in the lands once occupied by the deported Ephraimites. Cf. Schrader, *COT.*, ii. p. 267 foll. These exiled Israelite populations henceforth disappear from history.

These events must have made a profound impression on the neighbouring southern kingdom of Judah. The policy of Aḥaz still continued to be one of subservience to Assyria, and Judah played the ignoble rôle of vassal-state. Aḥaz could therefore only be a passive spectator, while Ephraim in the grip of her remorseless foe, unaided by the allies upon whom she had reckoned, waged her last life-and-death struggle. The annals in the Books of Kings are too scanty to afford us any light as to what passed at this time in Jerusalem. The internal policies of her king and his court are shrouded in mystery save for the occasional and fitful gleams of light that emerge from the oracles of Isaiah.

It will be necessary at this stage to interpose a short discussion on the thorny subject of chronology, which at this point in the history of Judah becomes complicated and difficult. The question we have to settle is: In what year did Aḥaz die and Hezekiah succeed to the throne? We have to deal with the following express statements in 2 Kings:—

(*a*) 2 Kings xviii. 1. Hezekiah ascended the throne in the third year of Hoshea, King of Israel. When did the reign of Hoshea begin? According to the data of the cuneiform inscriptions (see Appendix I to Introd. p. 81), this would be somewhere between 734 and 732 B.C., but the biblical statements would assign Hoshea's accession to 730 B.C. Hoshea, as we learn from the inscriptions of Tiglath-Pileser, was placed as Assyria's nominee on the throne of the defeated and slain Peḳaḥ, but it does not follow that his position as king was immediately recognized. The biblical date at all events is 730, when we consider the verses which follow.

(*b*) 2 Kings xviii. 9, 10. War against Samaria began in the fourth year of Hezekiah, the seventh of Hoshea, and Samaria was captured in Hezekiah's sixth year, which was Hoshea's ninth.

Now, it is extremely fortunate that this tragic event, the capture of Samaria, can be assigned to a very definite date. From the data of the cuneiform inscriptions (more fully explained in the appendix), with which the biblical statements agree, we know that the capture of Samaria took place in 722–1 B.C. This at once determines the date of Hoshea's accession as 731–30[1], and of Hezekiah's as 727–6 B.C.

(*c*) But as we read further, in verse 13 (= Isa. xxxvi. 1; 2 Chron. xxxii. 1), we are told that the invasion of Judah by Sennacherib took place in the fourteenth year of Hezekiah. Now this memorable invasion and the siege of Jerusalem (of which more will be said later) were naturally events of immense importance. Of this episode we possess a long account both in the Bible and in the cuneiform annals of Sennacherib. It is hardly probable that there would be any serious error as to its date in the biblical annals. In fact after the overthrow of Samaria, when we have only the history of Judah recorded for us, and have no longer any cross-references between the two sets of national records belonging to the northern and to the southern kingdom respectively, we are beset with much fewer difficulties, though they do not altogether disappear. There cannot be any doubt that the records of the northern kingdom, not only during the ninth century, but also and especially during the troubled years of Tiglath-Pileser's invasions (745–27), have come down to us in a very defective state, and nearly all our chronological difficulties and the discrepancies between the biblical statements and those of the cuneiform inscriptions arise from these defective records. Unfortunately *Judaean* history before 722-1 has become entangled in the chronological confusion in which the records of the northern kingdom (of Ephraim) have been involved. But after 722–1, when the latter history abruptly ends, our course becomes clearer, and we may fully trust the assertion that Sennacherib invaded Judah in the fourteenth year of Hezekiah.

---

[1] Respecting this margin of uncertainty extending to one year, see the author's article on Chronology in Schrader's *Cuneiform Inscriptions and the O. T.*, vol. ii. pp. 321 foll., and in Wright's *Bible Handbook* ('Old Test. Chronology'), p. 58.

About the date of Sennacherib's invasion we obtain precise information, fortunately, from the Assyrian records. It occurred in the year 701. Accordingly, 2 Kings xviii. 13 makes it clear that Hezekiah ascended the throne in 715–14 B.C., and this date is accepted by Wellhausen and Kamphausen. Here we seem to have an irreconcilable contradiction with the statements contained in (*a*) and (*b*).

(*d*) We have to consider the data of the respective ages of Aḥaz and Hezekiah at their accession. 2 Kings xvi. 2, Aḥaz was twenty at his accession; 2 Kings xviii. 2, Hezekiah was twenty-five. There is nothing improbable about these statements, and taken by themselves we have no reason to dispute them. But let us now look at the consequences if we accept (*a*) and (*b*). The date of the accession of Aḥaz is determined by the facts of Bible history, viz. the Syro-Ephraimite war and the war of Tiglath-Pileser against Pekaḥ that immediately followed, which the Assyrian annals illustrate for us. It is comparatively easy of proof that Aḥaz did not come to the throne earlier than 735[1]. We are therefore driven by (*a*) and (*b*) to the conclusion that Aḥaz was three or four years old when he became the father of Hezekiah!

---

[1] This is the date assigned by Kamphausen in his valuable *Chronology of the Hebrew Kings*, and accepted by the present writer in his edition of Schrader's *Cuneiform Inscriptions and O. T.*, vol. ii. p. 321. Precisely the same date is given in Hastings' *DB.*, article 'Chronology,' vol. i. p. 402, left-hand col., and in *Enc. Bibl.*, vol. i. col. 795, though the writer (Marti) seems disposed to place it a year later.

If we accept (*c*) in its entirety, we are thereby compelled to reject (*a*) and (*b*) with their repeated assertions that Hoshea and Hezekiah were contemporary in their reigns, and that the capture of Samaria took place when Hezekiah was king.

The hypothesis which the present writer advanced in 1888 (Schrader, *COT.*, vol. ii. p. 322), that Hezekiah was associated by Aḥaz with himself on the throne in 727-6 B.C., and that their joint reign lasted from that date till 715 B.C., appears to solve the problem more completely than any other theory hitherto proposed, and involves fewer rejections of biblical statements. The assertion that Hezekiah was twenty-five at his accession (2 Kings xviii. 2) refers, of course, to his sole reign in 715-14, and not to his joint reign with Aḥaz. The latter began when he was thirteen. How can this hypothesis be justified?

The death of the powerful Assyrian monarch Tiglath-Pileser III in 727 B.C. (like that of Sargon in 705) was an event of immense importance throughout Western Asia. We have already seen how it awoke the dormant energies of the Ephraimite kingdom which the strong personality of the Assyrian monarch had held under restraint. It was talked of in all the streets and bazaars of every Palestinian town, from Gaza to Damascus. Every cowed and subject vassal-state began now to breathe more freely. In Samaria the popular anti-Assyrian feeling became so strong that it would have remorselessly swept King Hoshea, Assyria's vassal-puppet, from place and power if he had not swum with the current of revolt. And Jerusalem was no exception. There can be little doubt that Aḥaz was exposed to like influences. The death of Tiglath-Pileser, his powerful support in 734 B.C., the hour of his extreme danger, must now have caused him many anxious moments. Isaiah was, we know (chap. viii), no friend of the Assyrian alliance, and his personal influence was a powerful factor. Doubtless strong influences were brought to bear on Jerusalem from Samaria. If alliance with Egypt was out of the question as a counterpoise to Assyria, because Egypt was then weak, why not follow Ephraim's policy and co-operate with Sibi (*Seveh*) of the north Arabian land Muṣri? It was a dangerous moment for a strong and persistent friend of Assyria. The King of Judah had now a most difficult and perilous rôle to sustain. He had to maintain his position at the head of the state when Ephraim once more began to move actively against the new and less energetic successor of the deceased Napoleon of Western Asia. Aḥaz naturally looked to the security of his throne and dynasty. He placed his young son, then about thirteen years of age, on the throne. Perhaps the latter had already become popular. Moreover, he had comparatively recent precedent for such an act. Azariah (Uzziah) his grandfather had delegated the office of kingship to his son when he was incapacitated from the discharge of its duties.

No change of policy was involved in the act, for Hezekiah was too young to exercise personal influence. It served only to perpetuate the succession.

On the other hand, the continuance of Aḥaz on the throne serves to explain many facts which to the historical student would be otherwise obscure. Aḥaz still held all the reins of power, and felt himself sufficiently strong to resist the pressure of the anti-Assyrian movement. We can now fully understand the quiescent attitude of Jerusalem while the tragedy of the sister-state in those terrible years 724–21 was enacting[1]. Such an attitude would have been hardly possible, unless the Assyrian policy of Aḥaz was continued under the direction of Aḥaz himself. That policy of friendship to Assyria was maintained as steadfastly by Aḥaz as the policy of friendship to Russia by Bismarck throughout his entire tenure of power. For the prevailing estimate of Aḥaz as a weakling needs some correction. The standpoint from which men and policies are judged in the O. T. is essentially the religious standpoint of the observer who belonged to the prophetic school of Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, and Jeremiah, or it is that of the religious legalism of the Book of Deuteronomy. But these do not necessarily coincide with the standpoint of the scientific and dispassionate political historian. Aḥaz at all events succeeded in guiding the ship of the state through stormy seas, and during his reign Judah remained, by means of his persistent policy of cynical opportunism, a dependent, minor vassal-state with its national existence, institutions and *sacra* intact while other Palestinian kingdoms had been engulfed or wrecked.

---

[1] It might be argued that the chronology proposed by Winckler, which places the death of Aḥaz in 720, solves the problem of Judah's political attitude while his Israelite kindred were suffering at the hands of Assyria. This date is adopted by Marti, article 'Chronology' in *Enc. Bibl.*, also by Guthe in his *History of the People Israel*, and it has recently

---

been regarded with favour by Professor Skinner in the Century Bible, *Commentary on Kings* (Introd., p. 44), though in his earlier work on Isaiah (Cambridge Bible) it is considered unjustifiable (Introd., p. 76, footnote). In our opinion, while it conserves to us the traditional length of the reign of Aḥaz (sacrificed in our own scheme), it leaves us at hopeless variance with nearly every other chronological datum of the Bible for the period 735–700 B.C.

The attempt which was formerly made to account for 2 Kings xviii. 13 (Isa. xxxvi. 1) by the supposition that there was a confusion between an invasion of Sargon in 712–11 B.C. and the later well-known invasion of Sennacherib in 701, has broken down utterly since it has been discovered that the passage in Sargon's Nimrûd inscription (line 8), in which mention is made of Sargon's subjection of the 'land Ja-u-du, whose situation is remote,' cannot refer to Judah. For the mention of Jaubi'di of Hamath in the next clause and the discovery of the country Jâdi in the Senjirli inscriptions make it quite evident that the 'land Jaudu' here is not Judah, but the northern country Jâdi lying adjacent to Hamath. In accordance with these facts, it is impossible to refer x. 28–32 to the days of Sargon (see note *ad loc.*).

There is no evidence that the policy maintained by Aḥaz was rudely broken when he died in 715 B.C. All the indications seem to point to the conclusion that the tradition of vassalage to Assyria was maintained (with one exception[1]) by Hezekiah till the close of Sargon's reign, 705 B.C. Probably this state policy had been acquiesced in by the elders during the reign of Aḥaz, for Sargon was as strong and as capable a military ruler as Tiglath-Pileser himself. But indications of a movement towards emancipation begin to be visible after 715 B.C. The evidence for this is to be found in chap. xx of Isaiah, which fortunately bears clearly on its forefront the historic occasion to which it refers, and the date of its composition. It is evidently a warning to Isaiah's countrymen not to rely on Egyptian help, and points to the overthrow of Ashdod as a political lesson to Judah not to be involved in the vortex of South Palestinian intrigues with Egypt and Ethiopia[2]. For signs were beginning to appear in the distracted and hitherto impotent Egypt of this twenty-fourth dynasty that better days were dawning. That dynasty was soon to see its end, if that end had not already come. See notes on chap. xx. 5 foll.

What was the attitude of Hezekiah towards this new movement? Probably he had been schooled in the policy of his father and, when his sole reign began, was not disposed immediately to break with it. Hitherto the policy of Aḥaz, the humble vassal of Assyria, had been justified by success—the success of a politician whose ambitions were severely curtailed and who was well content to keep Judah out of harm's way.

---

[1] This exception corresponds with the critical year 711 B.C. to which chap. xx. refers. In a fragment of a prism inscription Sargon refers to Judah, Edom, and Moab entering into treasonable relations with the North Arabian ruler. See commentary on chap. xx, footnote.

[2] It is not necessary to discuss Guthe's impossible supposition that this chapter (properly chap. xx. 3 foll.), as well as xxx. 1-5, xxxi. 1-3, must be assigned to the days of Tirhakah (691 B.C.). See his *Geschichte des Volkes Isr.*, p. 204.

Yet Hezekiah's personality is sharply contrasted in the Books of Kings with that of his father. It is a grave misfortune that we possess no living picture of him from a contemporary Hebrew writer possessing the vividness of Isa. vii, which records the dialogue between Isaiah and Aḥaz. Strangely, the only contemporary records which mention his name are the foreign cuneiform annals of Sennacherib. We have therefore to content ourselves with the secondary testimony of 2 Kings. Placing all these indications together, we have presented to us a young ruler of the noblest type stirred by high ambitions upon whom Isaiah's personality had wrought. Did the prophet associate him at all with the ideals suggested by his great watchword Immanuel?

Nevertheless it is fairly clear that the statesmanship of Hezekiah was not the statesmanship of the prophet. The latter might be summed up in a few sentences: Believe in Yahweh the Holy One of Israel. Judah shall suffer for his sins, but a remnant shall be converted to God, and Zion which is His abode and stronghold shall not be taken. Heed not Egypt—the 'Rahab Sit-still' that moves too late if he move at all. Heed not even Assyria, for Assyria's end shall one day come (cf. xxx. 3-5, 7, 27-33; xxxi. 1, 8). Probably these seemed to most of Isaiah's countrymen—perhaps even to Hezekiah—impracticable counsels, the words of a superhuman agent or mystic and not of a man of affairs. Hosea, the prophet of the northern kingdom about a generation earlier, was familiar with this attitude. 'The prophet is a fool, the inspired man is frenzied' (Hos. ix. 7). It is therefore not surprising that the politicians of Jerusalem paid as little heed to the warnings of Isaiah about the Egyptian alliance as the politicians of Samaria to the utterances of his elder contemporary. The Israelites also had their Cassandras.

The death of Sargon (705 B.C.) caused as great a flutter of excitement to pass throughout Palestine and Phoenicia as the death of Tiglath-Pileser III occasioned more than twenty years previously. Probably the effect was even greater. For coincident with the death of Assyria's great military leader and monarch there was a revival of strength in Egypt. About the time 708-6 B. C. the Ethiopian king Shabako the son of Keshta invaded the country north of Thebes and took the Egyptian king Bocchoris prisoner. 'Now for the first time the Palestinians and Phoenicians who observed the approaching Assyrian colossus with growing anxiety saw in the approaching dynasty of Egypt (the twenty-fifth) a power equal to the Assyrian to which they could appeal for help[1].'

Even Hezekiah was now constrained to throw his father's policy to the winds. And Isaiah was not uninfluenced by the pulses of the rising expectation of freedom from the galling fetters of Assyrian dominion. A new note appears in his oracles. He adopts a threatening attitude towards Assyria. Hitherto Assyria had been the 'mace of Yahweh's wrath.' But the instrument seeks to exalt itself unduly, and has failed to realize its subordinate relation to God (x. 5 foll., cf. also xiv. 24-27), and boasts, 'through the power of my hand—I have done it, and through my wisdom, . . and have removed the frontiers of nations and plundered their stores' (verses 13 foll.). God's word of comfort now comes to Judah for almost the first time for many years in Isaiah's ministry: 'Fear not my people that inhabit Zion because of Asshur that smites thee, . . for in a little while wrath is at an end, . . and it shall come to pass in that day that his burden shall pass from thy shoulder and his yoke shall cease from thy neck' (cf. also xxx. 27 foll., xxxi. 8).

About this time an event of great importance took place. The death of Sargon reacted powerfully on Babylonia as well as Palestine. Babylonia had for a long time been a centre of opposition to the supremacy of Assyria through the restless energy undaunted by defeat of its ruler Merodach-Baladan (Marduk-abal-iddin). This ruler, a man of ceaseless ambition, was originally King of Chaldaea (in the Assyrian inscriptions *mât Tâmtim* or 'sea-land'), and had possessed himself of a considerable portion, of Babylonia, but was driven out by Tiglath-Pileser in 729 B. C. After that monarch's death he recovered his position, and with the aid of the King of Elam obtained possession of his former realm. Though Sargon defeated him and his Elamite allies in 721 B. C. he could not dislodge him from the throne of Babylon, where the latter ruled by dint of foreign aid from that date till 709 B. C., when Sargon (the Arkeanos of the Ptolemaic Canon) finally drove him from Babylon, which he ruled himself until his death. Then, on Sargon's decease, Merodach-Baladan's enterprises revived, and the embassy to Hezekiah must be placed in this brief interval 705-4 B. C., when Merodach-Baladan was struggling to recover his Babylonian throne. This at length he succeeded in occupying for the third time—but this time for the brief period of six months only (according to Polyhistor's statement preserved in Eusebius)[1], or, following contemporary records, *nine* months.

---

[1] Max Müller, 'Egypt' in *Enc. Bibl.*, i. col. 1245.

---

[1] The Babylonian list of kings assigns *nine* months to the brief reign of Merodach-Baladan (*KIB.*, ii. p. 290 and Winckler, *Untersuch.*, p. 12) and apparently one month to Marduk-zâkir-šum (= Hagises ?). It is most unfortunate that the Babylonian Chronicle (transcribed by Pinches in the *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Soc.*, vol. xix. part iv; see *KIB.*, ii. p. 274 foll.) is seriously mutilated in this important portion, col. ii. lines 10-22. Sennacherib seems to have attempted the reconquest of Babylonia about 704 B. C. Probably the embassy of Merodach-Baladan may be assigned to about this date. Sennacherib set up as vassal-king in Babylon Bêl-ibni after Merodach-Baladan had been for a time driven out. But the Babylonian Chronicle makes it quite clear that Merodach-Baladan was able with the help of his allies to render Bêl-ibni's position so insecure that the latter was forced to become disloyal to Assyria, so that

It is this embassy which is vividly described in Isa. xxxix (2 Kings xx. 12 foll.), a chapter which, along with ch. xxxviii, evidently takes chronological precedence of the chapters that go before it, xxxvi–xxxvii. This inversion, however, originates with the compiler of the Books of Kings, from which this narrative section has been derived (chs. xxxvi–xxxix); 2 Kings xx. 1–19 is obviously an extract from a biography of the prophet, probably made a century or more later, which the compiler has placed after chs. xviii. 13—xix, irrespective of chronological considerations. This inversion of chronological order is more easily explained when we remember that only a brief interval elapsed (perhaps not more than about two or three years) between the embassy of Merodach-Baladan and the invasion of Palestine by Sennacherib. It would not be easily explained if we assume, with Winckler, that this embassy took place about seventeen years earlier[1].

---

both he and his officials were ultimately withdrawn to Assyria after having ruled three years (*Bab. Chron.*, col. ii. 26–29).

[1] Winckler's hypothesis is set forth with considerable ingenuity in his *Alttestamentliche Untersuchungen*, p. 139 foll., also *KAT.*^{3}, p. 270 foll. Cf. notes on Isa. xiv. 28–32. The year 720–19 is assigned by Winckler to this embassage of Merodach-Baladan. According to Winckler the death of Aḥaz had just taken place and the young Hezekiah had ascended the throne. 'The deputation had also to bring him congratulations on his accession; moreover, the reported display of the treasure-house (2 Kings xx. 13) becomes much more natural. We can readily understand the pride with which the young ruler wished to give them an idea of his riches' (p. 140). This looks very picturesque and plausible, but it is very improbable. There is no proof that the power of Sargon had suffered any diminution in the west, though in the east Merodach-Baladan had succeeded in maintaining his position in Babylon by the aid of his Elamite allies in spite of his severe losses at the battle of Durilu. Is it at all credible that a young ruler of the small vassal-state of Judah would inaugurate his reign by breaking with the safe political tradition of grandparent and father and bid defiance to the greatest monarch of his time by welcoming the ambassadors of Assyria's persistent opponent and neighbour? This he is

There is no reference to this embassy in the oracles of the prophet. The words attributed to the prophet in Isa. xxxix. 6, 7 (2 Kings xx. 17, 18) come from a later biographical source incorporated into a work compiled not earlier than the days of the Exile. Nowhere in the genuine oracles of Isaiah do we have any reference to exile in Babylonia, to which direct allusion is made in verses 6, 7. While, however, we may assume that the form in which the utterance of Isaiah has been presented to us has been moulded by the events which had recently happened in Jewish history and lay beyond the confines of Isaiah's prophetic outlook, yet a substantial historic basis remains. For the words of the passage do undoubtedly reflect his attitude (also the attitude of the prophet Hosea) towards foreign alliances. The student of Isaiah's words in chap. vii, uttered more than thirty years before, can scarcely doubt what his warnings would be now.

And this view receives strong confirmation from the interesting group of oracles delivered about this very time against the Egyptian alliance, viz. chap. xxx. 1–5 and chap. xxxi. Isaiah held precisely the same opinions about Egypt and an Egyptian alliance as he had announced ten years previously in the days of Sargon, when that monarch conquered Ashdod (chap. xx). Probably he now stood almost alone. In 711 his warnings were

---

supposed to have done, though Judah's once powerful sister-kingdom had been swept out of existence by Sargon two years previously, and the victorious battle of Raphia had just been fought against Ḥanno King of Gaza and his North Arabian allies (720 B. C.). And if Hezekiah (whose other acts scarcely prove him to be reckless) had on this occasion committed such a deed of useless folly, is it probable that his kingdom would have remained unmolested by Sargon for the next fourteen years? There is abundant justification therefore for maintaining the view advocated by Schrader in *COT.*, ii. p. 29 that this embassy to Hezekiah belongs to 704–2 B. C. It was probably one of the causes that precipitated Sennacherib's invasion of Palestine.

evidently supported by a strong Assyrian party who favoured the traditional policy of Aḥaz. Now almost the entire stream of national feeling flowed in a powerful tide towards an understanding with Shabako the Ethiopian king who ruled over Egypt. Isaiah passionately protested, though in vain, against this policy of an Egyptian alliance. It was directly contrary to Yahweh's purpose. Yahweh had not been consulted by the promoters of this policy. They were trusting in Egypt's shadow which was to become their shame. He coins an epithet which heightens the absurdity of Egypt's claim to be regarded as a great power. He combines with the name Rahab, the mythical monster—the dragon of the deep—the conception of inert helplessness. Egypt, which had repeatedly imposed upon the Palestinian states, from the days of Amen-Hotep (Amenophis III) and Rameses, as a powerful kingdom, he designates by the sarcastic title Rahab sit-still—the monster that procrastinates and does nothing! (see notes on Isa. xxx. 7).

Though the influence of Isaiah's personality at this time was very great it was not strong enough to stem the tide. About this time he came into violent conflict with Shebna the prime minister (or vizier) of Hezekiah, who evidently was a strong supporter of the Egyptian alliance, and succeeded in obtaining his temporary banishment[1]. This furnishes only one out of many indications that the prophet, like Jeremiah after him, felt out of harmony with much of the prevailing spirit of his time. It is quite true that he foresaw the impending humiliation of Assyria. The vast horde of Assyrian plunderers rushing on like a tumultuous torrent is only to have its way for one brief night. The morning will come, and it will have vanished (xvii. 12–14). About this time the Ethiopians were in great apprehension respecting the intentions of Assyria.

---

[1] See notes on xxii. 15 foll. The episode, it must be confessed, has its obscure features.

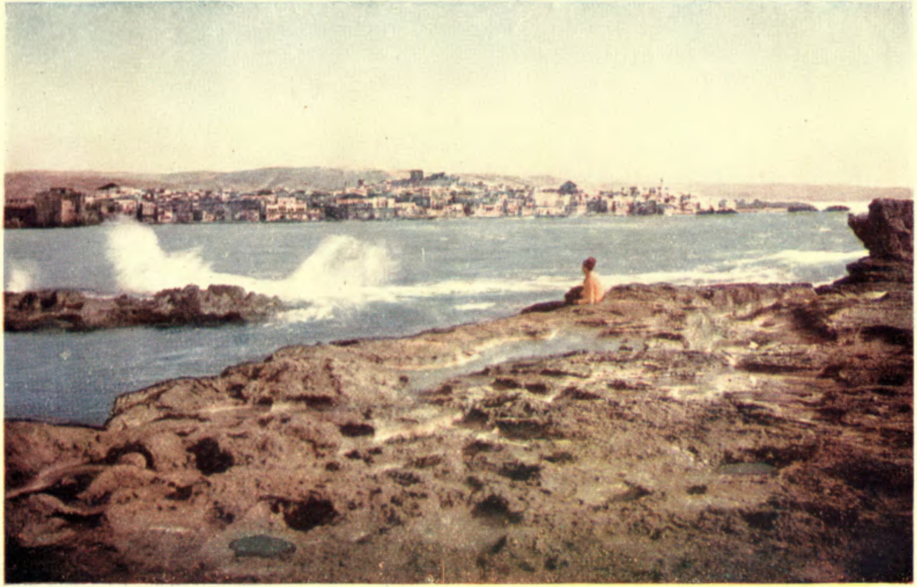


Photo. Photochrom Co.

SIDON

They had heard of the hostile designs and movements which threatened to overwhelm Egypt. Accordingly they were preparing to send emissaries by papyrus boats down the Nile stream to king Hezekiah. These swift messengers are reassured by Isaiah, who bids them return to their own people. He declares to them that Assyria's warlike enterprises will end in ghastly failure, and the bodies of the Assyrian warriors shall become the prey of mountain vultures and ravenous beasts of the earth (chap. xviii).

But the tone and temper of the Palestinian peoples were far different. While Ethiopia felt undue apprehension, Philistia and Judah were animated by undue elation and confidence. Popular feeling often runs to extremes. In 735, when the Ephraimite and Syrian armies were advancing against Jerusalem, the ruling classes of the city were in a condition of abject panic, and the restraining influence of the prophet was required to reassure them against the two spent ends of smoking logs (vii. 4). Now, thirty years after, they felt the other extreme of childish frivolous optimism. At this time Philistia was largely under the control of Hezekiah. After the oppression of the reign of Sargon, the Philistine cities were glad to shelter themselves under the aegis of their neighbour. The self-restraining policy of Hezekiah, succeeding the safe diplomacy of his father, had preserved Judah unscathed while the Philistine towns had felt the Assyrian's heavy hand. Now that Hezekiah had clearly revealed his intentions by the reception of Merodach-Baladan's overtures, they looked to Hezekiah for assistance. This good news of alliance between Hezekiah and Merodach, succeeding to the tidings of Sargon's decease, filled the Philistine towns with delight. They at once sent a deputation to the Judaean court. The prophet's warning voice restrains their enthusiasm: 'Rejoice not Philistia.' The 'mace' which dealt such terrible blows was broken on the death of Sargon. But the serpent's brood would arise—the fiery, winged serpent. At the same time the envoys are encouraged to look to Zion as a refuge in the hour of distress when the herald signals would be flaming in the northern sky, and the smoke of burning villages and strongholds would announce the advance of the desolating armies of Sennacherib (xiv. 29–32).

That advance, however, was delayed for about three years. After Sennacherib had succeeded in subduing for a time Babylonia and the allies whom the restless energy of Merodach-Baladan always succeeded in summoning to his aid, he turned his attention to the west which was seething with revolt. Probably all its states, from Tyre to Edom and Judah, had become defaulters in tribute-payment. His operations in the west, which he calls his 'third campaign,' have a profound interest for the Bible student because the fortunes of Judah became deeply involved in its course, and the Bible narrative 2 Kings xviii. 13—xix (Isa. xxxvi, xxxvii) covers a part of the story of this expedition. The date is definitely fixed by all authorities in the year 701 B.C. Most fortunately we possess not only the biblical account of this momentous campaign, but a full record of Sennacherib's own cuneiform documents, in two versions: (*a*) the longest and most important is the prism inscription, otherwise called Taylor's hexagonal cylinder, which is a continuous account of all Sennacherib's wars; (*b*) the parallel record, somewhat briefer, and in almost identical phraseology, on the Kuyundshik bulls. In Taylor's cylinder the account begins at col. ii. line 34[1] and ends at col. iii. line 41, and fortunately for us the text is well preserved. It is also fortunate that we have a fuller account of this Palestinian campaign than of any expeditions that precede or follow it, excepting his eighth against Babylon and the Elamites. The expedition began, as we might expect, with an attack on Tyre, but like Nebuchadnezzar he was unable to reduce it. He succeeded, however, in capturing from Elulaeus King of Sidon not only his own city Sidon, but also Sarepta, Acco, and other towns.

---

[1] Each column corresponds to one of the sides of the hexagonal cylinder. Consequently there are six columns in all. Similarly with the ten-sided Rassam cylinder of Ashur-bani-pal. All these documents are preserved in the British Museum.

The army moves southwards and enters the Philistine region. It is quite apparent that the Assyrians profited by the want of cohesion among the Palestinian states. Probably Moab, Ammon and Edom could not forget old feuds with their Judaean neighbour, and the promptings of self-interest led them to make overtures of submission. Even Philistia did not present a united front of resistance. Ashdod with Mitinti at its head yielded to the conqueror and paid tribute. But Ṣidḳa, who ruled over a group of Philistine towns, Ashḳelon, Joppa, Beth-Dagon, &c. (col. ii. 58-66), made a strong resistance, and his towns were probably not captured without a struggle.

It is by no means certain that the prism inscription gives us the accurate chronological order of events. Both Schrader and the latest commentator on this inscription, the Rev. C. H. W. Johns (article 'Sennacherib' in *Enc. Bibl.*), have noted the gaps in the narrative. The latter observes that nothing is said in this document about Lachish, where Sennacherib halted. Yet this halt at Lachish plays a considerable part in the biblical narrative. In fact it begins with this stage in Sennacherib's operations, 2 Kings xviii. 14 (Isa. xxxvi. 2), and this feature of the Bible story is strikingly confirmed by one of the reliefs in the British Museum which depicts Sennacherib on a throne receiving the submission of Lachish, and contains the brief inscription, 'Sennacherib, the king of the world, set himself on a great throne and received the spoil of the town Lachish.' Schrader, moreover, observes that there is a tendency in the cuneiform record to gloze over awkward facts, and that it 'purposely shifts the chronological order of events and ends with a reference to the rich tribute' (*COT.*, ii. p. 301). About this the reader can form his own conclusions from the translation appended to this volume (pp. 370-1). What we are chiefly concerned to do at the present moment is to attempt to reconstruct the actual order of events. At what point in the narrative does the Lachish episode come in?

The most probable conclusion is that it should be inserted into the account immediately after the desperate battle of Altaḳû or Elteḳeh which stood a few miles distant from Lachish. Probably the army of Sennacherib moved southwards to Lachish after that battle was fought. After this we take up the thread of the narrative in Isa. xxxvi. foll.

We shall therefore follow the course of Sennacherib's campaign, as it is described in his prism inscription, with the reserve of doubt already expressed as to its truthful representation of the actual sequence of events[1]. One feature that must impress the student is the large space (col. ii. 69—col. iii. 41) which is devoted in the inscription to the resistance of Hezekiah and of the towns subject to his influence. That influence was evidently considerable. The desperate resistance offered by Eḳron (*Amḳarruna*) was entirely due to the support derived from Jerusalem. The inhabitants of this town were probably among those who sent the deputation to Hezekiah to which Isaiah addressed the brief oracle of warning to which reference has been made (Isa. xiv. 29 foll.). At that time their king was Padi, a puppet of Sargon whom he may have installed (like Rukibti of Ashḳelon) during the Assyrian invasion 713-11 B.C. This king the inhabitants boldly delivered up to Hezekiah, who detained him in strict arrest at Jerusalem. Meanwhile a crisis in the campaign was swiftly approaching, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem appear to have surrendered themselves to an optimism and easy assurance which vexed the sad heart of Isaiah, the only man perhaps in all Jerusalem who estimated the dangers of the situation aright and had a clear vision of Judah's real source of strength—the Holy One of Israel. Isaiah passes through the tumultuous exultant city with indignant foreboding and bitter tears, 'for it is a day of discomfiting, treading down and perplexity' (xxii. 1–5). Zion, the altar-hearth of God, was to be beleaguered, and siege-works would be set up against her (xxix. 1–3).

---

[1] It might have been the case that some of Ṣidḳa's towns did not yield submission till after the conquest of Eḳron. For convenience in the narrative they are dealt with successively in one group (col. ii. 58-68).

Probably Hezekiah was reckoning on the ability of his allies to defeat Sennacherib even after the defection of Moab and Edom. He counted on the active co-operation of Egypt and also on that of North Arabia, the steadfast foe of Assyria and, as it turned out, more steadfast than the much-vaunted power of revived Egypt. This fact is obscured in the account contained in the Books of Kings, in which, owing to a confusion, Tirhaḳah's name is drawn into connexion with the narrative. Recent investigation proves that Tirhaḳah belongs to a later time and hardly appears on the scene of history till at least ten years later. Shabako was then (701 B.C.) the Ethiopian ruler of Egypt, and it does not appear that he took any part in repelling the Assyrian invasion. The investigations of Dr. Hugo Winckler have clearly proved that the kings who fought in alliance with Hezekiah and the revolting Philistine towns were not kings of Egypt, as Assyriologists formerly supposed, but kings of the North Arabian land called Muṣri or Muṣrân. Arabians constituted in fact a part of the fighting garrison in Jerusalem upon whom Hezekiah depended (specially mentioned by Sennacherib, col. iii. 31). These investigations, while they invalidate one detail in the narrative of the Books of Kings compiled more than a century later, confirm in a striking manner the absolute truth of Isaiah's insight and prescience. Egypt was still the false prop on which Palestine leaned—her evil genius, Rahab sit-still.

Eltekeh, a town close to the rebellious Ekron (cf. Joshua xix. 44, xxi. 23), called in Sennacherib's annals Altakû, was the scene of a desperate and by no means decisive battle that was now fought by the Assyrians against the Philistines with their Arabian allies. Sennacherib in his report of the victory makes much of his capture of the commander of the chariot-division as well as of the sons of one of the North Arabian princes. Schrader calls it a Pyrrhus-victory, since we have no statement as to the number of captives taken or chariots seized as trophies, details which in nearly all cases garnish Assyrian narratives. The capture of Timnath followed. Ekron was besieged, and the inhabitants were confronted with the gruesome spectacle, in which Assyrians delighted, of corpses impaled upon stakes set around their walls (col. iii. 3). After the fall of Ekron Sennacherib probably moved on with the main body of his army southward to the powerfully fortified town Lachish, whose strong and ancient walls have in recent years been laid bare by Mr. Bliss at Tell el Ḥesi. What operations he conducted at Lachish in order to reduce it we do not know. We know that it submitted to the Assyrians. There for the present he erected his head quarters. Probably he anticipated another desperate conflict with the Northern Arabs, reinforced, it may be, by Egyptian troops.

Meanwhile he had detached a corps to operate against Hezekiah. It ravaged Judah, and forty-six fortified positions were seized. At length Jerusalem itself was reached and closely beleaguered. Hezekiah, according to the Assyrian's scornful boast, was shut into Jerusalem 'like a bird in a cage.' It is at this point the biblical narrative begins (Isa. xxxvi, xxxvii; 2 Kings xviii. 13—xix. 37). In the introductory remarks to chap. xxxvi we have dealt with the critical problems affecting these chapters, which recent critics have divided into three distinct accounts. The first consists of a very brief record which in 2 Kings occupies three verses only (2 Kings

xviii. 14–16), and in the Book of Isaiah is altogether omitted. This (evidently an extract from the royal annals) is the only portion which covers the same historic ground as the inscriptions of Sennacherib. In the brief form of this summary in 2 Kings we learn that Hezekiah endeavoured in an abject manner to placate his powerful enemy by large gifts of money from the royal treasury, and that he even robbed the doors and pillars of the temple of their precious metal. This summary in 2 Kings xviii. 14–16 is in substantial agreement with the closing lines of Sennacherib's narrative, which adds further details, 'Besides 30 talents of gold and 800 talents of silver, I caused precious stones, glittering stones, lapis lazuli, an ivory couch, a lofty seat of elephant-hide and ivory . . . an enormous treasure, his daughters, his palace-wives, male and female attendants (?) to be brought after me to Nineveh, my royal residence; and he dispatched his envoys (?) to bring the tribute and tender homage' (col. iii. 34–41).

Sennacherib's inscription in its account of the campaign ends off with this bombastic flourish. It confirms the Bible narrative in yet another particular. Both the prism inscription and this brief summary never state that the beleaguered city was captured by Sennacherib.

The following two narratives, which are much longer and more vivid, viz. 2 Kings xviii. 13, 17—xix. 8 and 2 Kings xix. 9–37, are taken from biographical accounts of the prophet Isaiah, resembling the Elijah and Elisha narratives in 1 and 2 Kings. These furnish us with the story of the negotiations between the Assyrian envoys, the chief officer called Rabshaḳeh who plays the part of spokesman, the chief eunuch, and the Assyrian commander-in-chief (Tartan, cf. Isa. xx. 1) on the one side, and Hezekiah and his ministers of state on the other. In these two narratives we hear nothing about the large money payment. Whether this donative preceded, accompanied, or came after the negotiations, we do not know. The silence of the narratives renders it probable that the last supposition is correct. Probably it acted as a salve to Sennacherib's wounded vanity in his failure to capture Judah's capital and stronghold. Perhaps Hezekiah adopted this as a somewhat abject method of compromise between Isaiah and his followers, faithful to the 'Holy One of Israel,' who counselled absolute refusal of the Assyrian demands, and the growing crowd of city-rulers, probably with Shebna at their head, reinforced by the panic-stricken and starving multitude, who urged upon the king the policy of complete surrender.

The failure of the Assyrians to capture Jerusalem may be ascribed to two causes, one internal and the other external. To these may be added a third, the outbreak of pestilence—the angel of the Lord that smites with cholera and typhus (2 Sam. xxiv. 15 foll.), and follows in the track of armies and their slaughter as a grim spectre.

The *internal* cause is incarnate in a human personality—the prophet Isaiah. As we read the dramatic story we hear the stentorian tones of the speech of Rabshaḳeh delivered in the nation's language to the despairing king, nobles and people—a speech full of menace, argument, scorn and reproach, deriding the national God in which the people trusted, recounting Assyria's invincible career of conquest, and pouring, with only too good reason, contempt on Egypt, the broken reed. Yet we know that there was one man in all that panic-stricken Jewish population whose heart never once quailed. There is no spectacle sublimer in all history. Havelock in Lucknow, Gordon in Khartoum can hardly be cited as parallels. They fall immeasurably short of the inspired prophet of Jerusalem. Never were the strands of destiny so tightly strained. The fate of an ancient realm, of David's throne, seemed to hang suspended over the abyss by a frail thread—one man's personality. Beyond the walls of Jerusalem stood the impenetrable ranks of the besiegers. What was passing in the outer world was utterly unknown to the beleaguered garrison. But in this agonizing moment the prophet's soul was calm, resolute, and trustful, girt for that great hour. Only a few months before he sought to restrain the people amid their undue exultation. Now he restrains them in their despair, and bids the king and people trust and hope in the living God.

The *external* cause of Sennacherib's failure we can infer from his own records. There was serious trouble once more in that old storm-centre, Babylonia. Hezekiah's confederate, Merodach-Baladan, again an exile from his throne, was stirring up resistance to Assyria in Babylon in conjunction with another Chaldaean prince, Shuzub, who subsequently became king of Babylon under the name Mushêzib-Marduk. Bêl-ibni, formerly the creature of Assyria, was drawn into their toils. Elamites, as might be expected, were active participants in their efforts to throw off Sennacherib's yoke. News of these troubles reached the ears of the Assyrian king at Lachish, and he at once gave up the effort to capture Jerusalem and hurried eastward to re-establish his crumbling authority[1].

§ 3. THE INTERNAL SOCIAL AND RELIGIOUS CONDITION OF ISRAEL DURING THE LATTER HALF OF THE EIGHTH CENTURY.

The condition of Israel may be gathered from an attentive study of the prophets who lived during this period, Amos, Hosea, Isaiah and Micah. The occupations of the inhabitants of Palestine during the earlier regal period were mainly nomadic and agricultural, and the land at that time and till the days of Isaiah was largely held by small peasant proprietors. But it can scarcely be said that the growth of trade and civilization and the increase of material well-being tended to improve the condition of the small peasant farmer. Palestine is favourably placed for the growth of wealth. It is the highway of commerce between Egypt and Arabia on the south, and Syria, Assyria, as well as the great emporia of commerce, Tyre and Sidon, on the north. The corn, wine, and oil of Canaan were exchanged for the manufactured products which came through the Phoenician seaports. Among the Israelite population the simplicity of nomadic and agricultural life began to give way. Towns grew up, wealth increased, and a more complex civilization began to develop, and with it a wealthy class of rich landowners. We learn from Amos iii. 15 that it was a common custom for a wealthy man to own both a summer and a winter residence. These were luxuriously equipped with divans inlaid with ivory (vi. 4). A significant passage in Isa. ix. 9, 10 informs us that in building their houses the wealthier Ephraimites abandoned the old-fashioned sycomore wood (1 Kings x. 27) for the more expensive cedar, while hewn stone was taking the place of brick. If we are to regard Isa. iii. 18–23 as actually genuine, the growth of luxury in female attire during this period is one more indication of the great increase of wealth in the eighth century, to which the prophet bears express testimony in the striking phrase 'The land is full of silver and gold' (ii. 7). But evil results in social life flowed from this accumulation of wealth in the hands of a privileged class. One of these was the aggregation of smaller landed estates into the hands of a few and the dispossession of the poverty-stricken cultivator of the soil. These wealthy landowners 'add house to house and join field to field' until there is no more room for the small peasant proprietor. These *latifundia* injured the social life of Palestine in the eighth century as much as those of Italy in the days of the Gracchi. The language of the prophet Amos can leave no doubt that the small peasant was often cruelly oppressed by the wealthy landowner or the usurer who was able to bribe the judge and evict the poor man from his tenement without just cause. 'They covet fields and seize them, and houses and take them away' (Mic. ii. 2). The prevalence of bribery was all too clear (Mic. iii. 9-11; Isa. i. 23, v. 23). The chief engine whereby such oppression was wrought was the harsh law of usury, which allowed the exaction of interest amounting to 20 per cent., and permitted the harsh creditor to sell into slavery a debtor unable otherwise to discharge his liability. The debt might be a mere trifle amounting to a pair of sandals! (Amos ii. 6, viii. 6).

---

[1] Winckler in *KAT.*³, p. 80; Krätzschmar in Herzog's *PRE.*³, vol. xii. p. 647. Sennacherib's own prism inscription, in the lines which immediately succeed the Palestinian campaign, describes his campaign (the fourth) against Shuzub the Chaldaean in the swamps of the land Bêt-Yakin (col. iii. 42 foll.). This belongs to 701–700 B.C., and the fact is significant.

Another cause which aggravated the lot of the small cultivator was *war*. Foreign invasion meant the wholesale pillage of crops, fruit, cattle, and the wanton destruction of fruit-trees (Isa. i. 7, vii. 20, xvi. 9 foll.; Jer. v. 15-17; cf. 1 Sam. xv. 9; 2 Kings iii. 19). The inevitable result of the wars which ravaged Palestine in 735, 734-2, 724-2 B.C. would be the total ruin of the small farmer who, when confronted by absolute starvation, found voluntary servitude to be his only refuge (2 Kings iv. 1; cf. Lev. xxv. 25, 39). It is of course true that enactments existed which served to mitigate the hardships of slavery and which set certain limits to the harsh exactions of the creditor (Exod. xxii. 25 foll.; Deut. xxiii. 19). The seventh year, which brought release, was intended to have this effect, but it is extremely doubtful whether these laws were strictly applied (cf. Jer. xxxiv. 8-22), and there can be little doubt that slavery largely increased during the regal period, and its rigours became aggravated as the simple conditions of nomadic and agricultural life in the days of Saul and David were exchanged for the more elaborate civilization of the days of Aḥaz and Hezekiah to which prophetic literature bears witness.

The wealth and selfish luxury of the upper classes of society brought many vices in their train—more especially drunkenness. A vivid picture is presented to us in the oracles of Amos of the nobles of Ephraim reclining in their palaces in the fortress-city of Samaria upon beds of inlaid ivory, drinking wine in bowls and anointing themselves with the choicest of unguents while they sing idle songs to the sound of the viol (Amos vi. 4–6). Hosea describes to us how the nobles made themselves ill with the feverish glow of wine in their carousals upon the king's birthday[1] (Hos. vii. 5). Isaiah presents us with a companion picture of the protracted symposium of some of the wealthy young gallants in Jerusalem, who prolong their feast all through the day until the twilight, while the company regaled themselves with tambourine and lute (Isa. v. 11, 12).

The *religion* of Israel at this period was closely bound up with the worship of the high places to which so many allusions are made in the oracles of Hosea, and it may be accepted as a general principle that the features of the cultus that prevailed in the northern kingdom prevailed also in Judah, with the special exception of the calf-worship erected by Jeroboam in Beth-el and Samaria. In every high place scattered throughout Canaan Yahweh was worshipped in precisely the same manner as the local Baal, and was called by that special appellative *Baal* as the lord or owner of the sacred spot dedicated to him[2]. He was worshipped in the form of a stone-symbol called maṣṣebah—an upright stone which in primitive sanctuaries was a rude unshaped block, while in the more imposing and elaborate sanctuaries it might assume the form of a stately pillar or even two pillars (as in the Jerusalem temple). In the worship of these local sanctuaries the blood or oil of the sacrifice was smeared upon the stone-symbol, and the flesh of the animal was eaten by the worshippers after the animal had been slaughtered at the altar. But in the case of the burnt offering (ʽôlah, Kālîl) the entire animal was consumed by fire. In the early days of the Hebrew monarchy the *sacra* of the high place were closely bound up with the old clans of Israel, so that every sacrifice at a local centre, as at Beth-lehem, became a communal clan or tribal feast, and these would be held at special seasons, as at the new moon or once a year. Instructive examples of such sacrificial clan or tribal feasts may be found in the Books of Judges and Samuel (Judges ix. 27; 1 Sam. ix, 12-25, xx. 6). But at the close of the eighth century much of this clan and tribal life had disappeared. The cultus of the high place remained in feature and type the same. The stone-symbol was there—the *ashērah* or sacred pole was there; so also the sacred tree, whether terebinth or poplar, and often the sacred spring. Moreover, the three annual festivals—especially the feast of ingathering—were celebrated as in the olden times, but the old clan and tribal life had gradually declined amid the storms and other changes affecting national life in the ninth century. In all probability some of the smaller sanctuaries had passed out of existence with the local clans which supported them. Worship thus became more national and less local and exclusive. Probably there were relatively fewer local sanctuaries in Judah, owing to the dominating position of the temple of Solomon in Jerusalem, than existed in the sister state of Ephraim, which was more subject to disintegrating tendencies and to foreign, Phoenician influence. All these slowly evolving conditions prepared the way for the Reformation in Josiah's reign which suppressed the local sanctuary and made Jerusalem the only centre of legitimate worship. The Book of Deuteronomy in its present form emerged out of that reforming movement, and the religious ideals of that code dominate the redactors of the Books of Kings, who never omit to denounce the

---

[1] The 'drunkards of Ephraim' appear to have been notorious (Isa. xxviii. 1) throughout Israel.

[2] This we learn from some Hebrew proper names (Baaliah &c.), as well as from a significant passage in Hosea, chap. ii. 16, 17 (18, 19 Heb.), which should be regarded as genuine.

Israelite kings who tolerate or foster the worship of the high places. With the prophets of the eighth century it is far different. Hosea, Amos, and Isaiah clearly perceived the evils of the prevailing cultus of the high places, but they still stood at some distance from the age of Josiah, and do not censure the existence of high places but the impure character of the worship that existed there and closely approximated the character of the Canaanite cults. Hosea and Isaiah denounce Israel's *unfaithfulness* to Yahweh both in politics and religion. The unfaithfulness in *politics* was necessarily involved in any formal compact of alliance with a foreign state. These compacts were sealed by religious sacrificial rites—in other words, a *covenant*, in which the respective deities of the two nations were involved. But when, as in the case of Israel, a weaker and dependent state entered into a formal alliance with a stronger suzerain state like Assyria or Egypt, such political relationship could not fail to react prejudicially on the position and authority of Yahweh in relation to other national deities, especially when we remember how Yahweh's sphere and sovereignty were interpreted by the eighth-century prophets. Accordingly both Hosea and Isaiah emphasized the lesson of loyalty to Yahweh in political relations. Trust in Yahweh's love and power to protect His people meant in external politics that Israel should be self-contained and independent of foreign aid. Even the military use of horses and chariots, which had been long employed in Israel's wars and came into extensive use during the dynasty of the house of Omri, was also regarded as a foreign (Egyptian, Hittite, or Canaanite) importation and an act of disloyalty.

The unfaithfulness in *religion* consisted in the corruption of the primitive and simple worship of Yahweh (which Israel had derived from the early nomadic times) by the introduction of Canaanite as well as Eastern rites. Canaanite worship was sensuous in type. Its Baal and Ashtoreth worship, though connected with a hoary antiquity in which the sexual element played a large part[1], was nevertheless alien to Israel's ancient Mosaic religion which gave no place to a female consort by the side of Yahweh. The male and female attendants (the Ḳedēshîm and Ḳedēshôth) who pandered to sexual passion, which had from the earliest times been connected with the cult of Baal and Ashtoreth, had become an unwholesome importation from the Canaanites into the sanctuaries of Israel. In this way Yahweh's 'holy name was polluted and profaned' (Amos ii. 7). This denunciation by the prophet Amos is directed against the northern kingdom. That it also applied to the sanctuaries of Judah is fairly clear from indications in Jeremiah (ii. 1, 2, 20–23, iii. 2, 3, 6–11, v. 8, vii. 18).

It is important for the student of Hebrew religion to draw as clear a distinction as possible between the standpoint of the Deuteronomic redactor of the Books of Kings and that of the prophets of Yahweh in the eighth century. The latter made no protest against the ancient and primitive cultus of the high places—the stone-symbol or the sacred pole, or even the use of the ephod (the plated image of Yahweh) and the teraphim (ancestral images). These formed part of the normal religious life of ancient Israel from the days of Samuel and David until Isaiah's time. Even the soothsayer is not denounced by Isaiah. He held an important position in the social life of the people from the earliest times. In the days of Saul no war was conducted without the priest-soothsayer. Hence, in the enumeration of the chief props of the social fabric by Isaiah, the soothsayer takes his place by the side of the soldier, the judge, and the prophet (iii. 2). The legal system of Deuteronomy (B. C. 623) was far more strict (cf. Deut. xvi. 21, 22, xviii. 10–12). High place, sacred pole, and stone-symbol it laid under an interdict.

---

[1] A subject fully expounded in Barton's *Semitic Origins.* It is significant that while Phoenician (Canaanite) has not only *Ēl* for 'God' but also its feminine *elat* (see Lidzbarski's *Handbuch der nordsemitischen Epigraphik*, p. 219), Assyrian its *ilu* and *iltu*, the Hebrew has only the masculine form *ēl*. Though we cannot infer from this, as Bäthgen does, that in earliest times the Semites had no goddesses, yet he is right in noting the remarkable fact that the Hebrews had no word for 'goddess' and could only use *Elōhim* for that purpose (1 Kings xi. 5). See his *Beiträge zur semitischen Religionsgeschichte*, p. 265.

The invective of the prophet is directed against the *foreign usages*. The close of the eighth century was distracted by wars and rumours of wars. At such a time a terror-stricken people resorts to abnormal religious practices and borrows foreign rites. Aḥaz was prone to the adoption of innovations in ritual (2 Kings xvi. 9, 10); and the tendency to adopt foreign modes of divination, borrowed from the Philistines and still more from the East, was denounced by Isaiah. Judah was full of Eastern soothsaying—practices derived from Babylonia or Northern Arabia, accompanied probably by incantations in which foreign deities were invoked (ii. 6). A still more serious evil was the practice of necromancy, against which Isaiah directs his sternest rebuke (viii. 19, 20, xxviii. 18).

But the most serious evil of all was the immoral conduct of the priest and the ordinary professional order of prophets. Isaiah paints for us a revolting picture of a drunken priesthood and an intoxicated body of prophets making the sacrificial feasts scenes of their disgusting orgies, which rendered them utterly incapable of discernment and stolid in their resistance to the true words of God's messenger (xxviii. 7 foll.). It would be difficult to say which portrayal is more appalling—the picture just presented or the lurid spectacle of the murdering gangs of priests in Shechem or Gilead, who lay in wait for the pilgrims and left a track of blood behind them, which the oracles of Hosea present to us[1] (Hos. vi. 8, 9). The root of the evil lay in the utter divorce of religion and morality. The sanctuaries were crowded with worshippers and the altars loaded with offerings, while injustice and even murder went on unchecked. Religious cultus had no effect on conduct. Conduct bore no relation to religious cultus. The result was a disordered state, a diseased society. 'The whole head was sick—the whole heart faint. From the sole of the foot even unto the head there was no soundness in it' (chap. i. 5, 6, 11–15). The prophets of the eighth century, whose oracles have been preserved to us, were quick to perceive, or rather they instinctively realized what modern Europe only partially apprehends, that religion lies at the base of any effective morality. They would never have conceived of it as 'morality touched with emotion,' but as the very soul and essence of morality itself. And the only religion of which they knew, or would have cared to take cognizance, was not the conception of some dim universal metaphysical abstraction to which the conventional name 'God' is attached like a movable label, but the thrilling consciousness of the presence and power of a supreme personal and righteous will. On this basis they sought to reconstruct a religion which should embody ideas which would permanently quicken and inspire national morality, and thereby save the state from the disorders which threatened it with ruin.

---

[1] Micah also charges the priest and prophet with receiving bribes (iii. 11).

§ 4. THEOLOGY OF ISAIAH.

The religious conceptions of Isaiah form a synthesis of the ideas of the two prophets that preceded him, Amos and Hosea. It is easy to discern his debt to both.

The teaching of Amos, as Wellhausen has clearly shown[1], was the internal correlate of the great external fact which was then absorbing the attention of Western Asia, the advance of the Assyrian power. The overthrow of the Syrians (Aramaeans) at the beginning of the eighth century and the rapid advance of the armies of Tiglath-Pileser towards the Palestinian states, which were threatened with vassalage or extinction, had a profoundly important bearing on the religion of those states. In those days religion and national life were closely interwoven. The clan, the tribe and the nation were cemented by the religious *sacra*, which bound each member of the clan or tribe to the clan or tribal deity and to one another in the sacrificial feasts in which each partook. Moreover, the political acts of the tribe or nation could only be carried out under the aegis of the tribal or national god. His initiative or sanction was ascertained through the priest-soothsayer. The national god was the nation's leader in war and went before its armies. Consequently, as the Assyrian inscriptions and the Moabite stone abundantly testify, the consummation of a conqueror's triumph is to carry off the national images of the conquered people and deposit them in the shrine of his own victorious deity's temple. Hence the ark of Yahweh is carried off to the Philistine Dagon's temple in the disastrous days of Eli. Thus the deity of a conquered nation lost prestige and was discrowned of might. According to ancient Semitic conceptions he could then only be regarded as a demon. The vanquished people lost faith in its god, and cast its idols, when driven from house and home, to the moles and to the bats (Isa. ii. 20, cf. xxxvii. 10 foll.), since the deity of the conquering nation was stronger than its own. If deported to another land, its *sacra* became invalid and so perished.

---

[1] *Enc. Brit.*, 9th ed., article 'Israel.'

The popular religion in the days of Amos and Isaiah was steeped in these prevailing conceptions, for that religion was essentially local and national. What was to become of the religion of Yahweh if the oncoming tide of Assyrian invasion swept over Palestine, as Amos and yet more clearly Hosea and Isaiah foresaw? Amos solved this problem by emphasizing a truth which lay implicit in

Israel's religion, that Yahweh was more than local and national. *His sovereignty was universal.* Already the loftier minds of the Hebrew people knew Yahweh to be the creator of the world. The fragmentary old cosmogony of Gen. ii. 4^b–9 (J_1) clearly proves this, and it is impossible to regard this conception as a late Babylonian importation[1]. Yet to Amos belongs the credit of having brought this truth to the forefront and made it clear to his countrymen at a momentous crisis in their history. The idea of Yahweh was freed from narrow national trammels. It was Yahweh who not only brought the Israelites out of Egypt, but also the Philistines from Caphtor and the Syrians from Kir (ix. 7). He who made the Pleiades and Orion and turns the deep midnight darkness into morning, who calls to the waters of the sea and pours them on the earth's surface (v. 8), was Lord of all the world. Thus the conception of God was established on broad imperishable foundations. And to this truth he united another yet more vital. Yahweh was a *righteous ruler*, and His fundamental claim on man was that He should be just[1]. Amos denounces the religion of mere ceremonial that ignored the claims of morality (v. 11–15, 21–24).

---

[1] It is not possible to enter here into the endless Babel-Bibel controversy raised by Prof. Fried. Delitzsch. The conception of the universalism of Yahweh's dominion was helped by the fact that in origin Yahweh, like the Aramaic and Babylonian Rammân, was an atmospheric and celestial, and not a Chthonian or Earth deity. This may be shown by a multiplicity of indications. Thunder was God's 'voice,' lightning was the fire of Yahweh. Early and latter rain were His gifts. He was God of the heavenly hosts or stars which fought in the celestial highways against Sisera (Judges v. 20). His sanctuaries were on the mountains where earth and sky met. Hence He was called 'God of the mountains' by the invading Syrians (1 Kings xx. 23). The belief that His abode was heaven was no late conception, as Schwally and many other critics assume (see 1 Kings xxii. 19). It needs no detailed argument to prove that the original character of Yahweh as an atmospheric deity lent itself much more easily to the further conception of universal sovereignty. It was the later syncretism which blended Yahweh with the local Baal that obscured these primitive traits.

The scope of Hosea's teaching is narrower. His outlook is not so wide. While Amos surveys the destinies of the Palestinian peoples, including Syria, Ammon and Moab, Hosea's oracles are addressed to Israel alone. The unfaithfulness of Israel to Yahweh and the outraged love of the Divine Husband are his theme. The love of Yahweh is the dominating note in the Divine character upon which Hosea dwells—not so much His universal sovereignty and justice, though the ethical requirements of Yahweh's rule are certainly not forgotten. 'When Israel was a child I loved him' (Hos. xi. 1, cf. ix. 10). Over erring Israel He yearns as a husband over a faithless wife whom He seeks to restore (ii. 14, xi. 8 foll., xiv. 4). The question arises: In what does this unfaithfulness consist? And the answer to this question reveals to us that Isaiah's debt to Hosea, though not so large as his debt to Amos, was nevertheless considerable. The 'faithlessness' may be summed up under three heads: (1) in *political* relations—vassalage to Assyria or alliance with Egypt, a subject already illustrated in the preceding pages. (2) In *cultus*—desertion of the primitive purity and simplicity of the worship of Yahweh by worshipping local Baals. Even the calf-worship is condemned (viii. 6, x. 6, cf. xiii. 2), and image-worship generally, as well as all approximations to Canaanite ritual (iv. 11–14, x. 1, xi. 2) and practice. (3) *Corruptions in social life*—false swearing, murder, stealing, and adultery (iv. 2).

---

[1] The ethical element also lay implicit in Israel's old religion. Elijah's contest with Ahab over the Naboth incident and the old legislative codes preserved in **E** and **J** prove this. It is not necessary to determine how much was Mosaic. For the deities of the Semitic religions were also conservators of the social order and tradition, as the Semitic proper names Baal Berith, Baal Shafat (and Shafat Baal), Emeth Baal (see Lidzbarski, *Nordsem. Epigr.* i. p. 239) abundantly testify, as well as the Babylonian hymns to Shamash and Marduk. So also in Greek religion we have Zeus as the conservator of the sanctity of the oath, of the hearth, of the rights of strangers, &c. Amos, Hosea, and Isaiah would have had no audience for their appeals if they had not a basis in the national religious consciousness and past history on which to rest. Otherwise Hosea's 'unfaithfulness' has no meaning. Their achievement consisted in the fact that they succeeded in rescuing religion from mere ceremonialism (Amos vii. 10–17, Isa. i. 11–17) in which morality had no place, and in emphasizing and developing the ethical elements in the old religion. They thereby finally achieved the task of welding religion and morals into an indissoluble whole as the only means of regenerating society. This has been an enduring service to humanity.

The subjective and emotional side (summed up in the word *ḥesed* 'loving-kindness,' 'piety') of man's relationship to God, and the duty which he owes to his neighbour, was Hosea's contribution to the true prophet's message to Israel. It formed a necessary complement to the intellectual teaching of Amos. Both laid stress on the ethical elements in the Divine nature and the ethical requirements in true religion. Morality could no longer be divorced from religion. Yet Amos and Hosea regarded religion from distinct standpoints. To Amos, who lay stress on the universal and ethical sovereignty of God, religion was essentially righteousness. To Hosea, who lay stress on the Divine love, religion was essentially loving-kindness and duty loyally rendered.

Isaiah fused these elements into an indissoluble whole. The premiss of God's *universal sovereignty* is presupposed in his rebuke of Assyria, 'the mace' of Yahweh's wrath for the chastisement of Israel (x. 5 foll.). It is the fundamental principle of all his utterances (or 'burdens,' A. V.) against foreign peoples—Moab, Damascus, Ethiopia, Philistia. We hear the note which heralds it in the song of the seraphim in his consecration-vision: 'The earth's fullness' is the manifestation of Yahweh's splendour. Righteousness and justice are the ever recurrent theme of this prophet's ethical teaching. It is righteousness for which the prophet pleads in the opening chapter of the collection of his oracles preserved to us (i. 17). It is only by righteous conduct and just dealing that Zion can be redeemed from destruction (verse 27). It is righteousness and justice for which Yahweh waited and hoped when He sowed and tended His vineyard—Judah. But the fair fruits of righteousness were not there; instead there was the cry of the oppressed and downtrodden (v. 7). In all this we see the influence of the elder prophet Amos over the younger. In fact we have only to study Amos, chap. v, with its scathing denunciations of mere ceremonialism and stately pomp combined with unrighteous living, and then turn to Isa. i, to see how deep and far-reaching that influence was. And this impression is confirmed when we note that the 'utterances' of Isaiah against foreign peoples are more highly developed discourses, apparently framed on the simple and brief model of the oracles in the opening chapters of Amos.

The debt to *Hosea* is clearly discernible, though not so conspicuous. The conception of God's character as love is apparent in the opening words of Isaiah's oracles: 'Sons have I reared, yet 'tis *they* who have rebelled against me.' The conception of Divine outraged love is expressed here through the relations of fatherhood and sonship just as in Hos. xi. 1, 2. But the dominant metaphor of Hosea's oracles reappears in the lament over the faithful city Zion now become an harlot (Isa. i. 21). Hosea's conception of unfaithfulness to Yahweh by entering into alliances involving dependence on more powerful foreign states passed into the teaching of the great prophet of Jerusalem and determined his attitude in relation to foreign policy.

We shall now consider more fully the distinctive features of Isaiah's teaching.

1. The *doctrine of God* unfolded by Amos is expanded and developed by Isaiah. The Divine sovereignty will tolerate no rival. While it is not possible to say that Isaiah's monotheism is absolute in the sense that denies

all existence whatsoever to the deities of other nations, yet these occupy a secondary and shadowy existence. Their images are called 'nothings,' the work of men's hands (ii. 8, 18), and their presence in Israel's sanctuaries is not tolerated. So far Isaiah does not differ from the teaching of Amos and Hosea or transcend it. But in his conception of Yahweh as the universal righteous Judge he adds new features. In chaps. ii–v he proclaims the advent of a great 'day of the Lord which is to be a day of judgment.' As long as the storm of Assyrian invasion was still withheld from Judah, he predicts in general terms that it will come with destructive power over the land and destroy all its material splendour and break down human pride, not only the cedars of Lebanon and the oaks of Bashan, but also the high walls and towers and the stately ships of Tarshish. The destruction wrought on this day of judgment will serve to reveal that God stands alone in His supremacy of might (ii. 12–21).

To God is ascribed by Isaiah the title '*Holy One* of Israel' which frequently recurs throughout the prophet's oracles. He is acclaimed as 'Holy' in the song of the seraphs on the occasion of the prophet's consecration-vision. Into the primitive conceptions which underlie this word 'holy' in the Hebrew original we need not enter here, since they are dealt with in the note on chap. vi. 3. Stated in brief, Isaiah lifted the expression above popular usage by importing into it high ethical meanings—the moral attributes of Yahweh Himself. *Holy* connotes God's supreme exaltation combined with perfectly righteous character, whose presence could not be surveyed or approached by sinful men. The fundamental conception therefore which underlies this word, as Isaiah employs it, is *righteousness*. It is by *righteousness* Yahweh exalts and *sanctifies Himself*[1] (v. 16).

---

[1] Though these words may be a later insertion (see notes), they accurately express the mind of the prophet.

Moreover, Yahweh's nature is *spiritual*. In a notable passage the prophet asserts that God is *spirit* in contrast with the Egyptians who are but men (xxxi. 3). The idea which is involved in the word 'spirit' is moving, absolute, invincible energy as opposed to human weakness and inertness, the latter quality being especially characteristic of Egypt.

2. We shall now fittingly consider the contrasted state of human *sin* in the teaching of Isaiah. This sin in Israel assumed various forms, and might be viewed from varied aspects. In the presence of God's holiness and exalted purity it assumes the aspect of *uncleanness*. This is how Isaiah regarded himself and his own countrymen in the hour of his consecration-vision (vi. 8):

'In that fierce light which beats about a throne
And blackens every blot.'

But a more characteristic aspect is expressed by the word *rebellion* against Divine parental authority and solicitude —the rebellion of sons against One who is not merely Sovereign but also Father (i. 2–4). To this conception of the Divine relationship to His people and their sinful relationship to Him we have already referred. It approximates the dominating conception presented in the oracles of Hosea.

This is also expressed by the terms 'backsliding,' 'forsaking of God,' 'estrangement' from Him and 'doing despite' to Him, variant phrases which are accumulated in chap. i. 4. The modes in which this sinful conduct manifests itself are very various—the *pride* and arrogance of wealth; the military *ostentation* of horses, chariots, and fortresses (ii. 7, vii. 3; cf. xxii. 8–11). As in Amos and Hosea, one all-prevailing form of Israel's declension was *idolatry*, which in a notable passage is characterized as the most loathsome uncleanness (xxx. 22). Under the same category we might include the soothsaying borrowed from abroad, and, above all, the necromancy to which that troubled generation resorted instead of seeking the clear light of Divine teaching (viii. 19, xxviii. 18). Chap. v contains a catalogue of prevailing vices; the sin of drunkenness, of selfish greed of landed possession, and also bribery corrupting the administration of justice, being conspicuous among them.

3. *Faith* in God is inculcated by Isaiah as it had never been taught previously. It is a new note in prophecy, and the occasion of its proclamation by the prophet was the dramatic moment when he was confronted by the scheming politician Aḥaz (vii. 3 foll.). Isaiah challenges the incredulous monarch, who relied more on the strong material support of Assyria than on the invisible might of Yahweh, and declared to him: 'If ye will not believe, ye shall not abide secure.' This faith in the Divine power and presence which shall protect and save His people was expressed in a name *Immanuel*, 'God-with-us,' and it may be regarded as the watchword of Isaiah's message to his countrymen at this dark moment of their fortunes, when the king trusted in Tiglath-Pileser and the people resorted to the dark rites of necromancy and made 'covenants with Sheol' (xxviii. 15–18). This quiet 'rest,' this 'refreshing' (xxviii. 12), is compared to the waters of the Shiloaḥ stream that softly flow (viii. 6). This faith becomes still more defined as the years roll on. Faith in God was essentially bound up with Yahweh's dwelling-place, Zion. The symbolic names which were given to Isaiah's children, and the very name that the prophet himself bore, were signs from 'the Lord of Hosts who dwells in Mount Zion.' Zion shall be preserved; but in later days the prophet clearly asserts: 'Behold, I have founded in Zion a stone, a stone well tested, a corner-stone of precious solid foundation' (xxviii. 16). The following verse clearly shows that the 'foundation' is ethical: right and justice. This shall never be shaken, though the 'scourge' of Assyrian invasion pass over Judah.

4. The *eschatology* of Isaiah does not lie beyond earth's confines or even the times in which he lived. Therein (as

we have shown in the introductory remarks to chap. xxiv) we see the contrast between Isaiah's teaching and that of Apocalyptic. The day of the Lord, the Messianic age, and the rule in righteousness of David's son do not belong to the remote future [1], for Isaiah's message was intended to be one of practical and present help. The fact that it was not historically realized by the pre-exilian Jews is but one of the many illustrations (e. g. the parousia in the first Christian century) of the foreshortening of perspective in the anticipations of prophecy.

In the early stages of Isaiah's ministry he predicted for his countrymen destructive chastisements, and a like fate was to overtake the northern kingdom (ix. 8—x. 4). The first eight chapters of our prophetic collection, nearly the whole of which consists of the genuine utterances of the prophet, are filled with denunciations of Judah's sin and of the dire punishment which will ensue. These oracles may with considerable probability be assigned to the reign of Aḥaz (735-15 B. C.). Even the consecration-vision of the sixth chapter bears the impress of this time, and Cheyne is probably right in assigning to its composition the date 734 B. C. The most remarkable feature of that sublime chapter is its almost unrelieved gloom. When we turn to the LXX we find ourselves deprived even of the solace of the concluding phrase in verse 13, 'the holy seed is the stock thereof [2].' The prophet's message is to produce no effect. The people are to be impervious to truth. And this barren ministry is to continue while God's chastisements are to fall, cities are to become desolate, and the land wasted. Even the remnant left after the previous calamities have done their work is to be consumed in the devouring flame.

---

[1] An exception might be made of ii. 2-4 if the phrase 'in the latter days' be the genuine expression of Isaiah. This brief utterance might then be considered to refer to a more remote future than the age of the prophet. But it is possible that the phrase is redactional.

[2] Only found in Q marg.

But the prophet's mind did not always remain anchored in this gloomy roadstead. The conception that God was nevertheless present among His people, embodied in a name of significant potency, *Immanuel*, became the nucleus for an ever-growing hope. We are not of the opinion ingeniously set forth by Hackmann in his monograph *Isaiah's anticipations respecting the future*[1], that at the beginning of his career the prophet regarded the future of Judah with hope which passes away as his life proceeds into utter gloom, while, on the other hand, at the opening of his prophetic ministry the prophecies of destruction are all directed against Ephraim. This view, in our opinion, completely inverts the progress of Isaiah's mind and renders his attitude to Assyria in 705–1 unintelligible. The theory of Hackmann can only be sustained by wholesale excisions of inconvenient passages in Isaiah's later oracles[2], and by violent exegetical assumptions respecting the earlier ones.

The prophet borrowed from his Ephraimite contemporary Hosea the custom of naming his children with prophetic messages. Semitic names afford scope for these significant appellations. Babylonian names are often nothing but a pious wish or ejaculation[1], probably considered to have a magic potency for good.

---

[1] *Die Zukunftserwartung des Jesaia* (1893). According to this writer chap. vi contains a prophecy of complete destruction, not of Judah, but of Ephraim. But there is not a single indication in the chapter which would lead us to identify 'this people' in verse 9 with the northern kingdom exclusively (see Hackmann's discussion of this question, p. 72 foll.). The argument based on ix. 7–20 and xxviii. 1–4 is fallacious (see p. 75), since, as our commentary has shown, these can hardly be called 'the earliest' among the prophecies with a definite historic reference. They should be assigned to a date about nine years *after* 734.

[2] i. e. not only ix. 1–7 and xi. 1–9, but many others of which the English reader, who is not in a position to study the original monograph (in German), will find a list in Dr. Buchanan Gray's useful and discriminating article in the *Expositor*, November, 1894, p. 341. We have not space here to deal with Guthe's more reasonable theory, which I find it impossible to accept, developed in his *Zukunftsbild des Jesaia.* The reader will find a brief summary of this theory and of others in Gray's above-mentioned article, p. 332 foll. (see also Hackmann's monograph, p. 157 foll.).

From a very early stage of his prophetic ministry Isaiah, who himself bore a name which summed up his message and career, gave a prophetic name to his eldest son, *Sheār-yāshûbh*, 'a remnant shall return,' i.e. be converted to Yahweh. It is certain, therefore, that as early as 738 B.C., or even earlier still, Isaiah had foreseen the remedial effect of discipline. The pride of Judah was to receive condign chastisement, yet all would not be lost; a remnant would survive, disciplined by suffering. Though Zion had been faithless (i. 21), and one man oppressed another (iii. 5), and dire poverty with desolation would befall all ranks of society (iii. 1-3, 6-8), yet this purifying trial would purge Zion of her dross. The judges of the land would no longer accept bribes as of old (v. 23), but would be as they were in the nobler primitive past (i. 26), and Zion would once more be called 'the city of righteousness,' 'the faithful city.'

This conversion of the 'remnant' should be connected with the special relation of Yahweh to Zion, which is probably involved in the other prophetic name 'Immanuel.' Whatever else might be destroyed, Zion should be preserved from destruction, and this immunity is connected with the special relation of Yahweh to Zion in which He dwelt and where His central and most imposing shrine stood. There (as Prof. G. A. Smith points out) 'lived . . . the little band of disciples to whom Isaiah committed his testimony and revelation' (cf. viii. 16 foll.).

For the present Judah's chastisements would continue. Assyria is clearly indicated as the instrument which would inflict them—the 'razor hired in the parts beyond the river' (vii. 20).

---

[1] See the list in Schrader, *COT.*, ii. p. 225 foll.

This seems to be all that the prophet could say by way of comfort to his countrymen in the dark days of Aḥaz.

The death of Sargon and the awakening of Palestine and Egypt which resulted seem to have roused the prophet to new utterance. Now for the first time Assyria is threatened, and the prophecies respecting Zion assume a more definite form. Of this we have already spoken under (3) *Faith*, see especially chap. xxviii. 16, 17. Faith in the Holy One of Israel, who would preserve Zion and a faithful remnant amid all the storms that surrounded it, was destined to receive a signal vindication by the issue of the siege of Jerusalem in 701 B.C. Jerusalem escaped capture and Sennacherib withdrew his armies.

This exercised a profound influence both on the prophet and on later times. Its influence on the *prophet* is to be seen in the *series of Messianic utterances* that came from him, beginning with Isa. ix. 1–7 (Heb. viii. 23—ix. 6) and closing with ii. 2–4. In this last passage the great universal function of the unconquered Zion, now towering above all other hills, and the centre to which the nations flock, is celebrated in verses of serene beauty which were probably the last utterance of the prophet.

In Isa. ix. 1–7 and xi. 1–9 we have the completed portraiture of Immanuel. He is no longer a vague abstraction, but we see him now as a personality. Sennacherib's armies had withdrawn, but the danger of another attack still hovered on the political horizon. Thus the portraiture of the Messiah in ix. 1–7 is that of a Divine warrior-hero who would break the Assyrian yoke in a great battle. We have here an echo of the somewhat earlier oracle (xxx. 27–33), perhaps delivered in the very crisis of the siege, in which we learn that God would cause 'His majestic voice' to be heard, and 'display the descent of His arm in fierce wrath and the flame of devouring fire, destruction, rain-storm and hail-stones' (xxx. 30). The human instrument of this victory over Israel's foes, as we now learn, shall be a 'Prince of Peace' sitting on David's throne, upholding his rule by justice and righteousness. The same theme is the subject of a still later oracle in which the martial traits disappear (xi. 1–9). Probably the fear of an Assyrian invasion had then quite passed, and the 'shoot of Jesse's stock' appears as the ruler of a kingdom of which the centre is God's 'holy mountain,' Zion. His rule extends its benign influence over the earth, which becomes full of the knowledge of Yahweh as the waters cover the sea, and all antagonisms are reconciled (xi. 1–9).

We have another oracle of similar tenor, but briefer, in which the rule of the Messianic king is represented as a refuge for the storm-stricken and the weary (xxxii. 1–5). It may have been conceived at a time when it was necessary to allay certain anxious forebodings respecting the future.

Throughout all these oracles there is heard one ever-recurring theme—first uttered by Amos, but permanently enforced by the more powerful personality of his successor—that the *diseased state can be saved by righteousness alone.* '*Behold, I have founded in Zion a stone, a stone well tested, a corner-stone of precious solid foundation . . and I will make judgment the measuring line and righteousness the plummet*' (xxviii. 16, 17).

Isaiah was the first of a succession of prophets (which ends with Christianity as its consummation) who taught that 'the best is still to be.' Paradise does not lie behind us. This secured him his unique position.

The events of the year 701, the deliverance of Jerusalem, so largely wrought by the prophet's discourses and personality, exercised an immense influence over the seventh century, and served to establish the higher teachings of prophecy. It actually gave rise to the false confidence of the Jewish people in the days of Jeremiah, that Jerusalem would never be captured. So deeply had Isaiah's pronouncement, that Zion was inviolable (xxix. 7, 8, &c.) because it was Yahweh's abode, sunk into the minds of the people, that Jeremiah suffered all the dire penalties of anti-patriotism because he dared to oppose a belief that had come to be regarded as a fundamental article of faith. On Hezekiah's Reforms see note on chap. xxxvi. 7.

§ 5. CRITICAL PROBLEMS OF ISAIAH.

It has long been ascertained by the careful examination of the discourses contained in the sixty-six chapters of the Book of Isaiah that we have here rather a collection of prophetic literature, to which the name of the great prophet of Jerusalem has been appended, than the work of any single mind. Quite apart from the linguistic facts (not only individual words, but also phraseology and style) which present an irresistible body of evidence[1], a careful study of the *contents* clearly reveals that the entire mass of this literature is very far from being homogeneous. In Germany, from the days of Gesenius (more than eighty years ago) downwards, it has been increasingly felt that the hypothesis that different authors living in different ages wrote these discourses is the only possible solution of the complex problems presented by the literature. In Great Britain as well as America that is now the unanimous opinion of all Old Testament scholars. Without such an hypothesis to guide us we have no key to the interpretation of a considerable portion of the literature. Scientific, i. e. true historical, exegesis becomes impossible. It is this key to an intelligent appreciation of the meaning of these prophecies which the *Higher Criticism* (a term much misunderstood, especially by those who assail it) endeavours to furnish. And this hypothesis of diverse authorship in these larger collections called *Books* has been applied successfully to other books, such as the prophecies of Jeremiah, the books of the Pentateuch, and also to the Psalter, as well as to smaller collections like the prophecies of Zechariah. In all these cases, great names like Moses, David, or Jeremiah cover large collections, of which only a small portion consists of the work of the eminent personage whose name is attached to the collection.

---

[1] The character of this work precludes us from dealing with Hebrew words and idioms, which can only be presented intelligibly in the original. The best authority on this subject in English is, in a compact form, Driver's *Literature of the Old Testament*, and, in fuller detail, Cheyne's *Introduction to Isaiah.* For the English reader who is not conversant with Hebrew, Driver's *Isaiah, his Life and Times* (Nisbet), will be found exceedingly useful. The facts of style and the differences which in this respect characterize different sections of the literature are there clearly presented. We have also in the course of this commentary indicated these characteristics of word, phrase, and style in the introductory remarks to the various chapters or sections.

The general results of a careful critical analysis have shown that the prophecies of Isaiah fall into two main divisions.

1. Chaps. i–xxxix.

2. Chaps. xl–lxvi, formerly called the Deutero-Isaiah; but recent criticism has made it probable that this collection falls into two portions: (*a*) *The Deutero-Isaiah* proper, chaps. xl–lv, all of which belong to the Exile period, i. e. 550–38 B.C., and (*b*) the *Trito-Isaiah*, chaps. lvi–lxvi, composed in Palestine after the return from Exile, reflecting not only the yearnings and hopes, but also the disappointed expectations of the prophet and signs of declension exhibited in the young community.

We are here concerned with chaps. i–xxxix. Those who have read the introductions to the several chapters and sections in the commentary will note the varied character of these chapters. They may be grouped thus:—

A. *Chaps. i–xii.* This collection concludes with later non-Isaianic matter. Chap. xii is a song of thanksgiving and hope in the style of the late exilian and early post-exilian literature in chaps. xl–lxxvi. This collection is made up of smaller collections of Isaianic oracles made by the prophet's disciples.

(*a*) Chap. i belonging to the earlier period (with possible exception of verses 27 and 28), i. e. circ. 735 B. C.

(*b*) Chaps. ii–v beginning with a brief Messianic poem composed at the close of the prophet's life and ending with a fragment which forms the end of a beautiful elegy, the earlier portions of which belong to another brief collection (under (*d*)). In this smaller group chaps. ii–iv, closing with a brief non-Isaianic fragment, was the original nucleus to which chap. v, consisting of Isaianic poems and oracles, was subsequently appended. This collection, chaps. ii–v, refers to Judah's (and Ephraim's) social condition in the time of Jotham and Aḥaz.

(*c*) Chaps. vi—ix. 7 (6 Heb.), *The Book of Immanuel*, begins with biographical accounts of the prophet's ministry. His consecration-vision (vi), dialogue with Aḥaz, and discourses connected with the Syro-Ephraimite war and the condition of Israel and Judah 735–730 B. C., closing with the prophecy respecting the Hero-King, Isa. ix. 1–7 (viii. 23—ix. 6 Heb.).

(*d*) Chap ix. 8 (7 Heb.)—xi. 9 commences with an elegiac poem dealing with the sins and doom of the northern kingdom, the final strophes being preserved in chap. v; see above under (*b*). On this follows a series of oracles dealing with the downfall of Assyria, x. 5–34, which belong to the years 704–2. Lastly, as in the previous group (*c*), the series is concluded by a Messianic poem.

(*e*) Chap. xi. 10–16, xii later non-Isaianic extensions of the Messianic ideas of the preceding poem appended to (*d*).

B. *Chaps. xiii–xxiii.* 'Utterances' or 'oracles' (A. V. 'burdens') against foreign peoples. First among them, the long and beautiful elegy against Babylon (xiii—xiv. 23), comes from a later hand. Chaps. xv and xvi, oracle on Moab, contains on the other hand a passage from a pre-Isaianic poet adopted into the Isaianic 'utterance.' Chap. xvii, *on Damascus*, is perhaps the earliest oracle delivered by the prophet which has come down to us (circ. 736 B. C.) An *utterance on Ethiopia* (chap. xviii) follows. The *oracle on Egypt* (chap. xix) consists of a series of passages of which probably only a short fragment (19–22) is Isaianic. Chap. xx is a *symbolic oracle* which consists of a *warning against Egypt* based on the events of 711 B.C. It is probably placed here as a sequence to chap. xix on account of its reference to Egypt. The oracle which follows, '*concerning the sea-desert*' (xxi. 1–10), is directed against Babylon, and is evidently not the work of the prophet of Jerusalem in the eighth century, but emanates from a writer in the closing years of the Exile. The short and mysterious '*Oracle of Dumah*' (verses 11, 12) probably belongs also to the Exile period; but there are almost no data on which to build a conclusion. But the closing oracle of the chapter (verses 13–17), the *utterance* '*in the steppe*,' might be even assigned to an earlier date than Isaiah, if it be not composed by Isaiah himself. Chap. xxii. 1–14, called the '*utterance of the valley of vision*' (a very obscure title), is an Isaianic denunciation of the frivolity of Jerusalem in the serious crisis of 701 B. C. (see above, p. 37). The following section (verses 15–25) consists of a narrative of the *encounter between Isaiah and Shebna* which ends in the banishment of the latter. The *utterance against Tyre* (chap. xxiii), which immediately follows, was probably written by a disciple of the prophet.

C. *Chaps. xxiv–xxvii* constitute an apocalyptic group of oracles of varied contents standing altogether apart from the sections that precede and follow. A careful examination of the contents and their eschatological ideas leads us to the conclusion that we have here the latest compositions in the entire literature of the Book of Isaiah. The collection is certainly not earlier than the age of Alexander the Great.

D. *Chaps. xxviii—xxxiii.* God's great purpose concerning Zion. A series of discourses, most of which were composed by Isaiah. To the Isaianic chaps. xxviii–xxxii are appended chap. xxxiii, composed in later pre-exilian times by a disciple of the prophet. Chap. xxviii. 1–4 are a sad plaint over the drunkards of Ephraim and the doom of Samaria belonging to the date 724 B. C. (circ.). Verses 7–22 contain a denunciation by Isaiah of priests and prophets who disgraced the Lord's sacrificial feasts by intoxication. Verses 23–29, the Divine husbandry and its varied processes. Chap. xxix deals with the dire peril of Jerusalem and the impending siege (verses 1–7). The prophet denounces the dull unintelligent mind of his countrymen and the shallow spirit of the rulers (8–21). The concluding verses (22–24) are added by a later writer. Chap. xxx. 1–7, denunciation of Yahweh's rebellious sons and of the Egyptian alliance. To this there naturally follows another 'utterance' (A. V. 'burden') respecting the beasts of the south country—the desert which the Jewish emissaries to Egypt would have to traverse. Verses 18–26, a sudden transition from threatening to promises of Divine mercy. The Isaianic origin of this section is doubtful. On the other hand, verses 27–33 are evidently from the hand of Isaiah. Chap. xxxi, another denunciation by the prophet of the Egyptian alliance. Verses 6–8 are a didactic addendum by an Isaianic disciple. Chap. xxxii. 1–8, Messianic passage parallel to xi. 1–9 respecting the righteous King. Then follows (verses 9–14) a denunciation of the frivolous ladies of Jerusalem, composed probably at a considerably earlier time, probably during Sargon's reign or even before. On the other hand, verses 15–20, a brief Messianic fragment, belongs to the close of Isaiah's life. Here the genuine writings of the prophet, in this collection of prophecies, end.

Chap. xxxiii may be regarded as an addendum to the preceding group. It presupposes the events of the invasion of Hezekiah's territory by Sennacherib. There is much in this chapter that reminds us of the style and diction of Isaiah, and it is therefore probable that there was an oracle of Isaiah lying at the base of it, worked over by a disciple (so Ewald) or by some other living at the close of the seventh century. Verses 14–16 probably come from a post-exilian writer.

E. *Chaps. xxxiv and xxxv* are clearly non-Isaianic. The strong apocalyptic colouring of chap. xxxiv clearly shows that it is a late composition. Both here and in chap. xxxv we note the influences of Ezekiel and Trito-Isaiah. In chap. xxxiv. 13 foll. observe the impress of Isa. xiii. 21, 22. A judgment of Divine wrath is to visit all nations, especially Edom. To this a beautiful poem, (chap. xxxv) with Deutero-Isaianic echoes, is added celebrating the return from Exile. We may probably assign both these chapters to a later post-exilian period.

F. *Chaps. xxxvi–xxxix* form an historical appendix added probably for the convenience of the Jewish reader who wished to have at hand a narrative of the stirring episodes of Sennacherib's invasion of Palestine, the siege of Jerusalem and its escape from capture—events in which the personality of the prophet played so conspicuous a part. Accordingly excerpts were made from 2 Kings xviii. 13, 17 foll.—xx. 19, and into these was inserted (between 2 Kings xx. 11 and the following verse) a song celebrating Hezekiah's recovery from his illness, Isa. xxxviii. 9–20. This evidently comes from another late source, and has the appearance of being an old Psalm like Hab. iii inserted into the prophecy. These excerpts from 2 Kings have an interesting parallel in Jer. lii, which is a duplicate of 2 Kings xxiv. 18—xxv. 30.

The question now arises: How were these different groups, A, B, C, &c., combined into a whole? We have comparatively few data to guide us.

Which of the collections were the earliest? Here analogies and strong probabilities open the path for us. The *earlier collections in the book probably came first, and to these the subsequent collections were successively added.* We may adopt this as a general principle. Thus in the entire collection of canonized Hebrew literature the *Torah* formed the *first* Canon, the *Prophets* (*Priores* and *Posteriores*) the *second* Canon, and the *Hagiographa* the last in order, and this order of chronological succession is the order in which they stand in our Hebrew Bible. Similarly in the Psalms, the first book, Pss. i–xli, contains the earlier Psalms and was the earliest collection (with the probable exception of Pss. i and ii which were attached later). On the other hand, Books IV and V were the latest collections of all in the Psalter and are naturally placed at the end. But we can only follow this as a general principle, not as a rigid rule.

Thus A (chaps. i–xii), which consists of smaller groups or collections, formed the first instalment constituting the nucleus of the great Isaianic library. And it contains a larger proportion of genuinely Isaianic matter than any other collection, and contains his most important oracles. It may have been current as a collection in the early post-exilian period.

The next collection, xiii–xxiii, consists of a series of oracles headed by the significant editorial term 'utterance' (A. V. 'burden'). We find the same editorial term employed in the Deutero-Zechariah (ix. 1, xii. 1) as well as in Nahum, Habaḳḳuk, and Malachi. Now Stade has shown that the Deutero-Zechariah (Zech. ix–xiv) probably belongs to the early Greek period. Consequently 300 B.C. would not be too early a date for this collection. Did this collection include the strange apocalyptic group xxiv–xxvii? This seems very questionable. On the other hand, it is by no means improbable that it also included the following collection xxviii–xxxv, or that the latter came very soon to be attached to this preceding series of utterances. Two indications seem to point to this conclusion: (1) chap. xxviii has no heading as we might expect, (2) in chap. xxx. 6 we find the same characteristic editorial heading 'utterance' ('burden'). Consequently the same editorial influences seem to have been at work in this collection as in the previous series xiii–xxiii. How then came the separate group xxiv–xxvii to occupy its position between these two groups? It is very difficult to answer this question. These chapters obviously bear no relation whatever to the oracles which precede or to those which follow them. They are, as we shall see (in the Introduction prefaced to the commentary), the latest compositions in the entire Book of Isaiah. They seem to have been inserted between the prophecy on Tyre (xxiii) and the denunciation of doom against Samaria (xxviii) because there was no other suitable place for them. Cheyne's solution of the problem of these enigmatical chapters, that Alexander's conquest of Tyre is referred to in xxv. 2, xxvi. 5, may afford the key to the answer to the question why these chapters succeed chap. xxiii, since that chapter is an oracle directed against Tyre and prophesies its destruction.

At what time chaps. xxxvi-xxxix were added to the previous collection i-xxxv, it is certainly difficult, if not impossible, to determine with our present information. Duhm considers that this was done by the same editor who redacted chaps. i-xxxv, consequently not long after the compilation of that collection.

For a very long time chapters xl-lxvi must have existed as a separate collection of prophecies. This is clear from 2 Chron. xxxvi. 22 foll., in which the passage Isa. xliv. 28 (that Cyrus would cause the temple to be built) is treated as the word of Jeremiah. The so-called Deutero-Isaiah (xl-lxvi) must at that time (circ. 300 B.C.) have been regarded as a body of literature standing quite apart from the Isaianic collection or collections which then existed.

On the other hand, in Ecclesiasticus or Wisdom of Jesus ben Sira or son of Sirach, xlviii. 23-25, we read respecting Hezekiah that he—

'Was strong in the ways of David his father,
Which Isaiah the prophet commanded,
Who was great and faithful in his vision.
In his days the sun went backward,

And he added life to the King (Isa. xxxviii. 4-8).
He saw by an excellent spirit that which should come
to pass at the last;
And he comforted them that mourned in Sion' (cf.
Isa. xl. 1, lxi. 1-3).

Assuming 180 B.C. as an approximate date for Ecclesiasticus, we can see from the above quotation that by that time the entire collection of the Book of Isaiah (chaps. i-lxvi) had been formed, and it had long been assumed that the discourses in chaps. xl-lxvi were addressed by Isaiah of Jerusalem to those that would mourn in Zion in the coming days of the Exile. In other words, chaps. xl-lxvi had long been added to the book. This must have been done at some time between 300 and 200 B.C.

The Book of Isaiah occupies the first place among the *Prophetae Posteriores* in all our modern editions of the Hebrew Bible, as it does in the oldest Hebrew MS., the Codex Petropolitanus 916 A.D., and this, we gather, was the place assigned to it in the Jewish canon of the third and fourth century A.D., from the testimony of Origen and of Jerome (in *Prologus Galeatus*). But we have clear indication that in earlier times the traditional order was different. In the Talmudic treatise Baraitha Baba Bathra, fol. 14^{b}, there is a reference to the fact that the order at one time was Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Isaiah, Minor Prophets, which is still preserved in several German and French MSS. In the LXX Isaiah follows the Minor Prophets and precedes Jeremiah.

§ 6. BIOGRAPHICAL DETAILS RESPECTING THE PROPHET ISAIAH. CHARACTERISTICS OF HIS STYLE AND THE PROBABLE ORDER OF HIS DISCOURSES.

The only trustworthy facts about the life of the great prophet of Jerusalem are to be derived from the Book of Isaiah itself. His name Isaiah signifies 'Help (or Deliverance) of Yahweh,' or, as Sabaean proper names seem to indicate, 'Yahweh has helped' (or delivered). It is by no means certain that this was his original name. It may have been subsequently assumed by the prophet in reference to his mission, as a sign like the names which he bestowed on his sons Sheār-yāshûbh, 'remnant shall return' (or be converted), and Maher-shalal-ḥash-baz, 'hasten-spoil speed-booty' (cf. viii. 18 note). He was the son of Amôṣ, not to be confused with the prophet Amos, as Greek writers like Clemens Alexandrinus (*Stromat.* i. 327) have done, owing to their ignorance of Hebrew and its sibilants. We know from chaps. vii and viii that Isaiah was married and was the father of several sons. His ministry began in the closing year of Uzziah's life (740–39 B.C., vi. 1). His prophetic calling must therefore have been exercised for more than forty years, and extended over the reigns of Jotham, Aḥaz, and Hezekiah. Whether he actually survived the last-mentioned king is uncertain. The later legend that he was sawn asunder in the reign of Manasseh implies that he did. This legend appears to underlie Heb. xi. 37, and finds an echo in the 'Ascension of Isaiah,' a Jewish apocalypse in Christian framework belonging to the second century A.D. We also find it in Epiphanius's so-called *Lives of the Prophets* [1]. Further details respecting the prophet's life and work are not necessary, since they are given under § 2.

With reference to the *style of the prophet's diction* no one will question Canon Driver's dictum: 'Isaiah's poetical genius is superb.' Probably no ancient Hebrew writer—not even the author of the speeches of Yahweh in Job xxxviii—xlii. 6—possessed a greater faculty of imagination or had a more instinctive perception of the power of words. 'Every word from him,' says Dillmann, 'kindles, stirs and strikes its mark.' The descriptions are simple and natural, never overlaid with detail or artificial. The consummation of art in artlessness is fully attained by Isaiah. Compare the simple sublimity of the consecration-vision in Isa. vi with the corresponding consecration-vision and its complex elaboration of wheels and living creatures in Ezek. i. The former occupies seven verses in the recital, the latter twenty-five. Specially remarkable is Isaiah's command of powerful metaphor. He is especially fond of the metaphors of flood, storm, and sound. Cf. viii. 8, 'And it shall pass over unto Judah flooding and coming over, reaching as far as the neck' (similarly x. 22, xxviii. 17, and xxx. 28); so also in xxx. 30, Yahweh 'will display the descent of his arm in fierce wrath and the flame of devouring fire, destruction, tempest of rain, and hail-stones.' As an example of vivid description we would cite the close of the great strophic poem ix. 8—x. 4, verses 25-30. The closing verses descriptive of the advance of a conquering and destroying Assyrian army will be found above, § 2, p. 15. A fine illustration of the power of sound in Isaiah's vocabulary will be found in xvii. 12. Isaiah is also prone to use alliterations and punning assonances, e. g. v. 7 (on which see note). There is a fine balance and even rhythmic flow in his sentences which the student is best able to appreciate when he uses Duhm's valuable commentary (in German), where the rhythmic form is more clearly indicated by the rendering than in any other recent commentary. In addition to these leading general characteristics, we will specify certain particulars whereby the Isaianic oracles may be discriminated from the other later discourses contained in the Book of Isaiah.

---

[1] See 'Chrestomathy' in Nestle's *Short Syriac Grammar* in Portae Linguarum Orientalium Series (H. Reuther, Carlsruhe and Leipzig, 1881), p. 53.

(*a*) Allusions to idolatry, necromancy and foreign practices of divination.

(*b*) References to Assyria as the dominant and threatening military power.

(*c*) Denunciation of Egypt as a delusive support and a pretentious fraud.

(*d*) Denunciation of the social sins of self-aggrandizement of the powerful at the expense of the poor and weak. Denial of justice to the oppressed. Distortion of justice through bribery.

(*e*) Yahweh designated as the 'Holy One of Israel,' and the people's true stay and refuge.

(*f*) Ceremonialism rebuked and also pride and self-exaltation in material prosperity.

(*g*) Day of the Lord announced as a destructive ordeal through which the nation must pass and only a purified remnant will survive.

The following is approximately the chronological order of the genuine Isaianic oracles. In some cases we have very few data, if any, to guide us.

Chap. ii. 6–21, 739 B.C.
„ xvii on Damascus, probably 736 B.C.
„ i. 1–26, 735 B.C. rather than 701 B.C., when the tone of the prophet was more hopeful.
„ vii. 1—viii. 18, 735–31 B.C.
„ vi, which refers to the prophet's call in 740 B.C. (Uzziah's death-year), was probably composed about 734 B.C.
„ v. 1–24, circ. 730 B.C. (?).
„ iii. 1—iv. 1 may belong to the period 730–25 B.C.
„ xxxii. 9–14 might be assigned to the same period.
„ ix. 8—x. 4; v. 25–30, 726 B.C.
„ i. 29–31 refers to northern kingdom probably about 725 B.C.
„ xxviii. 1–4, 724 B.C. (circ.).
„ viii. 19–22 might either belong to 735, like the preceding verses, or to any time between 725 and 715.
„ xxviii. 7–13 might be assigned to some time between 724 and 715.
„ xxviii. 14–20 may be conjecturally referred to 713 B.C.
Chaps. xv and xvi are an earlier oracle in reference to Moab composed by an unknown writer and employed by Isaiah 713–11 B.C.

Chap. xx, 711 B.C.
„ xxii. 15–25, 705 B.C.
„ xiv. 24–27 and 28–32, 705–4 B.C.
„ x. 5–27, 705–4 B.C.
„ xxix. 1–21 }
„ x. 28–32 } 703–2 B.C.
„ xvii. 12–14, xviii. }
Chaps. xxx and xxxi } 702 B.C.
Chap. xxii. 1–14, 701 B.C.
„ xxi. 13–17, its chronological position a quite unsolved problem; it might be either an early or late oracle of the prophet.

After 701 B.C. we may place the Messianic passages in the following probable order: ix. 1–7; xi. 1–9; xxxii. 1–8; 15–20; [xix. 19–22]; iv. 2–4 and ii. 2–4.

§ 7. RECENT IMPORTANT COMMENTARIES AND AIDS TO THE STUDY OF ISAIAH.

First among these should be placed Cheyne's *Commentary*, 2 vols. (third edition, 1884). This is a mine of well-sifted information and valuable exegetical help, but it does not furnish the latest views of the writer. These will be found in his *Introduction to the Book of Isaiah* (1895, A. & C. Black), a work of immense, careful research into the minute details of a critical study of the individual oracles of the prophet. It is a monumental work with which no advanced student can dispense. Cheyne also contributes the volume on Isaiah to the *SBOT.* series, which will be found very useful.

Of equal importance to the student conversant with German is Duhm's *Das Buch Jesaia*, contributed to Nowack's *Hand-Kommentar* series (1892—a second edition in 1902 contains no material alterations). This is perhaps the most valuable commentary that has appeared in Germany since the days of Ewald. Though many of the writer's conclusions as to the date of Isaiah's oracles appear to the present writer extreme[1], and his views respecting the looseness of the canonical framework of the prophets are scarcely tenable, yet this work remains the most notable as well as original contribution to the study of Isaiah of recent times. Duhm has devoted special attention to the metrical form of the oracles, and his restorations of text as well as critical conclusions as to authorship are frequently based thereon. Keen insight, a fine literary sense, rare combination-talent and a pungent racy humour (especially when the views of Dillmann are under discussion) combine to make this volume one of the most illuminating as well as attractive that a Hebrew student can possess.

Dr. Karl Marti's Commentary (in German), contributed to another series (1900), is a compact and lucid work. The matter is well arranged. Though the materials are clearly presented and the best sources of information consulted, the work can scarcely make claim to originality. The author's conclusions are more advanced than those of Duhm (e.g. with respect to ix. 1–7, xi. 1–9, xxxii. 1–8, as well as ii. 2–4). It is, however, easy to see that the work is very largely influenced by Duhm and, in a less degree, by Cheyne and Hackmann. Dillmann's Commentary on Isaiah[2] (the fifth edition in the *Kurzgefasstes exegetisches Handbuch* series) is conservative in its treatment of Isaiah, as we might expect from the veteran scholar who to the last remained unconvinced by Kuenen's and Wellhausen's views respecting the date of the Priester-codex. Dillmann is on the whole a safe as well as learned guide. The most recent and best ascertained results of archaeology are always utilized. His critical judgment is uniformly sound, though slow to move. Since Dillmann's death the work has been edited afresh by Kittel (1898), whose views respecting the date and authorship of some of the sections are more advanced than those of his predecessor. There can be no question that the last edition is a considerable improvement on the fifth, and is an indispensable aid to the O.T. scholar.

---

[1] e. g. chaps. xxiv–xxvii placed as late as 128 B. C.; chap. xxxiii in 162 B. C.; chaps. xxxiv and xxxv in the days of John Hyrcanus. Respecting chaps. xv, xvi, and xix, as well as other sections, see the commentary.

[2] Published in 1890, an entirely new work superseding the fourth edition by Diestel (1872), which again in its turn took the place of the earlier editions of Knobel's Commentary.

The earlier German commentaries on Isaiah—those of Gesenius, Ewald (in the *Prophets of the Old Covenant*), Hitzig, and Delitzsch (Franz)—it is not necessary to characterize. This has been done with some completeness by Cheyne in his Commentary (third edition, 1884), vol. ii. p. 277 foll.

Among recent English works devoted to Isaiah the student should take note of Skinner's Commentary (in the 'Cambridge Bible for Schools'), scholarly and compact, always characterized by a well-balanced judgment on critical questions, and especially useful as an exposition of the theological conceptions of the prophet.

Driver's *Isaiah, His Life and Times* is a very vivid and clear presentment of the history of the period, illustrated by citations from the Assyrian annals and the oracles of the prophet, of which excellent translations are given. A full description is given of the literary work of the prophet, and a very complete delineation of his style is furnished for the ordinary English reader. For the preacher and homiletic student Geo. Adam Smith's *Isaiah*, 2 vols. (Hodder and Stoughton), is a most eloquent and quite unique book of really priceless value. Few works published in recent years have been awarded a heartier welcome. Every page is rich in suggestion for the scholar as well as the preacher. We have found it impossible to quote such a book, as the process once begun would have easily ended in expanding the present work to an excessive size. The same writer's article 'Isaiah' in Hastings' *DB.* will be found very useful and characterized by sound judgment. See also Bennett and Adeney's useful *Biblical Introduction.*

Among other accessory aids Schrader's *Cuneiform Inscriptions and the Old Testament*, 2 vols. (Williams and Norgate), will be found indispensable by the more advanced student. It contains quotations in transcribed Assyrian from all the cuneiform documents which throw light on the Old Testament. These are quoted and commented upon *seriatim* in connexion with each O. T. passage in the order in which it stands in the successive books of the Hebrew Canon. This work was originally published in German in 1882 and the English translation in 1885–8. The new edition (third) of the German work by two brilliant specialists, Winckler and Zimmern, is on a totally different plan. Cuneiform documents are not cited in connected passages, and the work is no longer a commentary on the Old Testament, but a systematic exposition of Assyrian and West-Asian History (by Winckler), and of Babylonian religion and philology (by Zimmern) with special regard to their bearings upon the Old Testament (as well as on the Apocrypha and New Testament). In Winckler's treatment his own special theories acquire considerable prominence.

APPENDIX I

THE ASSYRIAN EPONYM CANON.

No more important documents exist in the British Museum than a set of terra-cotta tablets brought over by Layard and other explorers from Nineveh. Our veteran Assyriologist, the late Sir Henry Rawlinson, was the first to explain their contents in a series of articles which he contributed to the *Athenaeum* in 1862. He there showed that these tablets were lists of Assyrian officials, each official standing to represent a particular year, in the same way as the pair of consuls at Rome or the *archōn epōnumos* at Athens. Thus the particular year in which an event happened is marked by the name of the official who was eponym, i. e. gave his name to the year. The eponymate was called in Assyrian by the technical name *limu*. The late George Smith wrote a useful work on this subject called *The Assyrian Eponym Canon*, containing transcriptions and translations of these lists. These may be found in Schrader's *COT.*, vol. ii. pp. 178–95, and *KIB.*, i. pp. 204–15. An examination of the lists shows that there was a more or less regular series of officials appointed as eponyms. The series naturally began with the king, whose eponymate, however, does not necessarily come at the very beginning of his reign. Next to the king came the *Turtanu* or 'Tartan' (Isa. xx. 1), or commander-in-chief. Then came the *rab-êkali* or chief of the palace (King's chamberlain). After him came an officer called *tukultu*. Then followed apparently the provincial or town governors. After the list of officials was exhausted the series recommenced. Four copies of these *canons* of rulers have been preserved in a more or less mutilated condition. But fortunately they supplement one another's defects. In this way we possess an unbroken series of annual eponyms extending over two centuries (892 B.C. to 666 B.C., near the close of the Assyrian empire).

But the question arises: How are these dates determined? And how are they identified with each respective annual eponym? Fortunately we possess, in addition to the mere lists of eponym officers, other lists of the same individual names, coupled with memoranda, recording in brief some event, as a campaign, revolt, or pestilence, which occurred in a particular year. Now one of these brief memoranda is of quite unique importance, since it enables us to settle the chronological sequence and identify the eponym year. This brief memorandum runs thus in the translation:—

'Pur-(ilu-)Sagali of the land Gozan. Insurrection in the city Ashur. In the month Sivan the sun was eclipsed.'

Now this eclipse has been calculated by the English astronomer Mr. Hird to be that which took place on June 15, 763 B.C. It was a remarkable total eclipse which passed over Nineveh and Western Asia. Not improbably the prophet Amos, who was an attentive observer of natural phenomena (Amos v. 8, viii. 8, ix. 6), makes a subtle allusion to it in viii. 9.

The importance of this identification of the eponymate of Pur-il-Sagali with the year 763 B.C. is at once obvious. The entire unbroken series of annual eponyms with their accompanying events can now be determined with as much chronological precision as any event of modern times. It must be remembered that these clay tablets are contemporary or nearly so with the events to which they refer, unlike the biblical documents, which were not only often redacted, but were also in many cases drawn up long after the events to which they refer. On the other hand, the Assyrians, like the Babylonians, were very careful in the marking of events. We frequently meet with such expressions as 'in my fifth campaign' or 'in the eponymate of N. N.' in the royal Assyrian annals. Accordingly by comparing these notes of time with the Eponym canon we can absolutely fix nearly every occurrence into the chronology of the period. But this is not all. These events are contemporary, sometimes identical, with those which are recorded in the Bible, e.g. the capture of Samaria, the invasion of Palestine by Sennacherib, &c. Now on a previous page we have shown how frequently errors have crept into the biblical chronology. Consequently we have in the Assyrian Eponym canon an invaluable corrective which, in conjunction with the other Assyrian records, enables us to reduce the Hebrew chronology to something approaching exactness. To illustrate this we cite the Eponym lists for 734 and 733 B.C.

Thus in the lists of Eponyms we read, on the reverse col. v, the following names for these two years:

[734 B.C.] Bêl-dan-an.

[733 B.C.] Ashur-dan-in-an-ni.

but in the lists with additional memoranda we read in these years:

[734 B.C.] Bel-dan-an of the city Kalaḥ—To the land Pilista (Palestine).

[733 B.C.] Ashur-dan-in-an-ni of the city Mazamûa—To the land Damascus.

The year 734 was the year in which Tiglath-Pileser's armies invaded Palestine and overthrew Peḳaḥ. In the following year he overthrew Rezin of Damascus.

APPENDIX II

HEBREW CHRONOLOGY.

The Hebrew chronology of the eighth century B.C. is, as we have already seen, encompassed with difficulties, especially in the latter half of that century. In order to bring the chronology of the Israelite kings from the days of Menaḥem to those of Peḳaḥ and of the contemporary

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE

CONTEMPORARY EVENTS.	ISRAEL.
	Jeroboam II, 785-745.
	Zechariah } 7 months. Shallum
	Menaḥem, 745-736.
735. Syro-Ephraimite War.	Peḳaḥiah, 736-735.
734-2. Invasion of Ephraimite kingdom by Tiglath-Pileser III and conquest of its northern provinces, Damascus overthrown, Peḳaḥ slain, and King Hoshea installed.	Peḳaḥ, 735-732. Hoshea, 730[1]-722.
722. Capture of Samaria by Sargon.	Close of the history of the northern kingdom with capture of Samaria, 722-1.
720. Battle of Raphia and defeat of Seveh (Shabi) by Sargon.	
711. Conquest of Ashdod by Sargon.	
704. Embassy of Merodach-Baladan to Ḥezeḳiah.	
701. Invasion of Judah by Sennacherib.	
625. Beginning of Jeremiah's prophetic ministry.	
607. Destruction of Nineveh.	
593. Beginning of Ezeḳiel's prophetic ministry.	

---

[1] Note the *two years interregnum*, 732-30 (comp. Hos. x. 3). Probably it was some time before Hoshea, Assyria's nominee, was accepted by Israel as their king.

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE (*continued*)

JUDAH.	ASSYRIA.	EGYPT.
Uzziah, 790-739. Jotham, conjoint reign, 754-739. Jotham, sole reign, 739-735. Aḥaz, 735-715. Hezekiah associated with Aḥaz, 726-715. Hezekiah's sole reign, 715-687. [Hezekiah's illness, 704.] Manasseh, 687-641. Amon, 641-639. Josiah, 639-608. Jehoaḥaz, 608-7 (three months). Jehoiaḳim, 607-597. Jehoiachin, 597. Zedeḳiah, 597-587(6). The Jewish kingdom ends with the capture of Jerusalem in 587-6, and with the flight and capture of Zedekiah (2 Kings xxv. 3; Jer. lii. 6). 550-536. To this period in the Exile belongs the Deutero-Isaiah (xl-lv). Return from Exile, 536.	Shalmaneser III, 783-773. Asshur-dân III, 773-755. Asshur-nirâri, 755-745. Tiglath-Pileser III, 745-727. Shalmaneser IV, 727-722. Sargon, 722-705. Sennacherib, 705-681. Esar-haddon, 681-668. Asshur-bani-pal, 668-626. Downfall of Assyria and foundation of NEW BABYLONIAN EMPIRE. Nabo-palassar, king of Babylonia, 625-605. Nebuchadrezzar (Nebuchadnezzar), 605-562. Evil-Merodach (Amil-Marduk), 562-560. Nergal Sharezer, 560-556. Nabonidus, 556-538 (Nabû-nâid). Capture of Babylon by Cyrus II, 538.	Twenty-third Dynasty. Middle and Lower Egypt divided among twenty petty rulers (of Libyan origin). Twenty-fourth Dynasty (Saitic) Bocchoris. 708-6. Twenty-fifth Dynasty Shabako (Ethiopian). 691. Tirhaḳah (Taharḳo, Assyr. Tarḳu). 609. Pharaoh Necho, 2 Kings xxiii. 29. 588. Apries (Uaḥ-eb-rē) or Pharaoh Hophra.

Judaean kings into harmony with the results of Assyriology, it became necessary to compress the reign of Pekaḥ from twenty years to about three or four. Fortunately the researches of Winckler, based on the discovery of the Senjirli inscription, have rendered it probable that the Azariah mentioned in the mutilated inscriptions of Tiglath-Pileser as leader of the confederacy of Hamathite states is *not* to be identified with the biblical Azariah (Uzziah). Consequently it becomes no longer necessary to assume that he was an active ruler in 738 B.C. This considerably relieves the chronological tension which formerly ensued in Judaean history from which Kamphausen's scheme and that adopted by the present writer (in Schrader, *COT.*, ii. p. 320 foll.) suffered. In the scheme now appended we have adopted the conclusions of Winckler and Rost (*KAT.*^{3}, p. 320) so far as they affect the reigns extending from the accession of Amaziah to that of Aḥaz, 798–735, and the contemporary period in the northern kingdom. But, as we have already indicated, we differ from Winckler's conclusions respecting the chronology of the reigns of Aḥaz and Ḥezekiah. We also differ from that chronology in the regal period *preceding* the reign of Amaziah given in *KAT.*^{3}, *ibid.*

THE BOOK OF THE PROPHET

ISAIAH

REVISED VERSION WITH ANNOTATIONS

ABBREVIATIONS

DB. Hastings' *Dictionary of the Bible.* *O.T. Old Testament.*

COT. Schrader's *Cuneiform Inscriptions and the Old Testament*, based on the second edition of the German work (*KAT.*[2]).

KAT.[3] The third edition of Schrader's *Keilinschriften und das Alte Testament*, by Winckler and Zimmern.

KIB. Schrader's *Keilinschriftliche Bibliothek*, vols. i-vi.

ZATW. Stade's *Zeitschrift für Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft.*

Enc. Bibl. Encyclopaedia Biblica.

SBOT. Sacred Books of the Old Testament.

i, ii, &c. Rawl. refers to Rawlinson's *Cuneiform Inscriptions of Western Asia* in successive volumes.

J. Yahwistic writer in the Hexateuch.

E. Elohistic writer in the Hexateuch.

I. Isaiah's writings.

R. Redactor.

Ex. Exilian writer. PE. Post-exilian writer.

A.V. Authorized English Version.

R.V. Revised English Version.

RS.[2] *Religion of the Semites* (Robertson Smith), second edition.

PRE.[3] Herzog's *Realencyclopädie für Protestantische Theologie und Kirche* (third edition).

LOT.[6] Driver's *Literature of the Old Testament* (sixth edition).

Is.[1] Isaiah's biography.

Is.[2] Later biography of Isaiah.

THE BOOK OF THE PROPHET

ISAIAH

[R] THE vision of Isaiah the son of Amoz, which he 1

CHAPS. i–xii. FIRST COLLECTION OF ISAIAH'S ORACLES.

Chap. i. *Indictment of Judah for disobedience.*

i. 1. The words of this first verse are the editorial title added to the collection of Isaiah's prophecies. As they now stand before us, this first verse is introductory to the entire collection contained in this book; but this was not its original function, as an examination of the contents of the verse clearly shows. For the scope of the prophecies is here limited to **Judah and Jerusalem,** but when we turn to the series of 'burdens' (or 'utterances') respecting the destinies of the varied cities and states contained in chaps. xiii–xxiii, the inadequacy of the title which restricts the subject of the oracles to the Southern Palestinian Kingdom becomes at once manifest. Accordingly we are driven to the conclusion that this superscription or title was originally intended to refer to the much smaller collection of Isaianic prophecies contained in chaps. i–xii; chap. xii being a poetic epilogue probably composed in much later times (see notes on that chapter). To this smaller collection the superscription forms an adequate descriptive preface or title, though in the oracle, chaps. ix. 8—x. 4, v. 25–30, the denunciations of the prophet are also directed against the Northern Kingdom of Ephraim. But even this small collection is made up of still smaller ones. Chaps. ii. 1—iv. 6 commence with an introductory title and close (as they begin) with a bright poem respecting the religious future of Zion; while chaps. vi—ix. 6 not improbably form another smaller group.

Various considerations of language strongly militate against the Isaianic authorship of this verse. Among these we may note that the Hebrew word for 'vision' (*ḥāzôn*) is a term belonging to later Hebrew literature, and is employed to designate a collection of oracles. In this technical sense it is employed in the superscription to the oracles of Obadiah and Nahum (Obad. i. 1; Nahum i. 1). Another detail is the expression 'Judah and Jerusalem.' Isaiah in his own language (iii. 1, 8; v. 3) reverses the order. When we compare this verse with the similar headings saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem, in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah.

of other prophecies (Jeremiah, Hosea, Amos), it is clearly seen to be editorial.

Ewald in his commentary on the *Prophets of the Old Covenant* calls this opening chapter 'The great arraignment,' and this correctly describes the general contents. The accusation convicts Israel of faithlessness and ingratitude (verses 2, 3), as well as obstinate folly in the face of the heaviest chastisements (4–9). The prophet then rebukes the utterly false conceptions of religion which laid stress on externals; abundance of sacrifices, frequent festivals and crowds in the temple-courts, while the heart was evil and the hands blood-stained. Cleansing of the life from evil deeds, justice and mercy are God's supreme requirements (10–17). It is impossible under the actual moral conditions to expect acquittal before God's tribunal. The only path to national safety and prosperity lies through obedience to God's will (18–20). Then follows a lament over the degenerate city unfaithful to its past, given over to bribery, and neglectful of the claims of justice and mercy (21–24). Yet better days are coming, the restoration of the good old times. The city will become purified, and its rulers will be righteous once more in their dealings (25–28). Repentance and shame for the old heathenish practices in groves and under terebinths will be wrought in the mind of the people by the stern and consuming discipline of national calamity (29–31).

A close examination of this chapter reveals that it is not a homogeneous unity composed at one and the same time. This was indeed perceived as long ago as 1780 by Koppe; but Cornill carries disintegration too far when he divides the chapter into four separate utterances (verses 2–3, 4–9, 10–17, and 18–31), and maintains that the connecting links consist of certain key-words or phrases such as 'Sodom' and 'Gomorrah' in verses 9 and 10, and 'sons' ('children') in verses 2 and 4[1]. For the recurrence of phrases is a well-known feature of Hebrew style in continuous passages, and therefore affords us no satisfactory criterion of independence or separateness in the passages (cf. the Psalms of degrees, especially Ps. cxxi). A more trustworthy though hardly certain indication consists in the metre (i.e. number of accented syllables), upon which Duhm bases his critical conclusions. Both form and contents point to the integrity of the entire section (verses 2–17). To what historical circumstances do they refer? About this opinions have been divided. The older commentators (Gesenius, Delitzsch, and Dillmann) argued for the date 735 B.C.,

---

[1] *Zeitschrift für Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* (designated by the cipher *ZATW.*), 1884, p. 84 foll.

[I] Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth, for the LORD 2

---

when Jerusalem, in the days of Aḥaz, was beleaguered by the united forces of Ephraim and Aram. The last-named critic argued that the severe denunciations of social oppression and acts of violence on the part of the rich and powerful (verses 15 and 17) are more in the style of the older discourses of Isaiah v. 7 foll., x. 1 foll., and are better suited to the degenerate times of Aḥaz than to the reign of the upright and faithful Ḥezeḳiah. On the other hand, it has been doubted whether the social condition of Judah at the close of the eighth century varied much from that which prevailed in the days of Aḥaz, while the description of the isolation of Zion as 'like a booth in a vineyard or a lodge in a cucumber field' is better suited to the desperate crisis of 701 B.C., when Jerusalem was closely invested by Sennacherib's armies. This is the view adopted by the more recent commentators—Cheyne, Driver, Marti, and G. A. Smith. The writer of this commentary inclines, however, to the earlier view represented by Dillmann, and regards his arguments as fairly cogent.

On the other hand, it is not easy to determine the date to which verses 19, 20 belong, and the same remark applies to the following six verses, 21–26, composed in elegiac measure, to which verses 27, 28 may perhaps be a later addendum (as Duhm supposes). Both these brief sections are assigned by Marti to the year 705 B.C., but there are no definite grounds for this assumption.

The same uncertainty as to date attaches to the closing verses, 29–31, which characterize the prevalent cultus of the high places. The metrical form is quite distinct from that of the sections which precede, but there is no sufficient internal ground for assigning its authorship to a late period; in fact, Cheyne seems disposed to assign it to Isaiah (Introd., p. 7), but Marti confidently regards it as late. It may be a fragment of a denunciation of tree-worship by Isaiah, as Cheyne surmises, and it should probably be assigned to an earlier date than 722 B.C. Duhm, in fact, considers that it refers to Northern Israel rather than Judah, and compares chap. ii. 6 foll., x. 1–4, xvii. 1–11. This view of the passage is confirmed when we turn to Hosea the prophet of the Northern Kingdom (iv. 13).

This opening chapter, placed at the head of the collection, chaps. i–xii, may be regarded as a characteristic summary of all that is most essential in Isaiah's teaching. In it we find blended the dominant notes of the oracles of both Amos and Hosea, viz. (1) God's character as righteous and His demand that His people should be just and merciful in their conduct, and that moral take precedence of ritual obligations (verses 12–17, 18, 23; cf. Amos iii. 9, 10, iv. 1, v. 10–27), and (2) God's character as love outraged by faithless Israel (verses 2, 3, 21; cf. Hos. i–iii, xi. 1–8).

hath spoken: I have nourished and brought up children,
3 and they have rebelled against me. The ox knoweth his
owner, and the ass his master's crib: *but* Israel doth not
4 know, my people doth not consider. Ah sinful nation, a
people laden with iniquity, a seed of evildoers, children
that deal corruptly: they have forsaken the LORD, they
have despised the Holy One of Israel, they are estranged
5 *and gone* backward. Why will ye be still stricken, that ye
revolt more and more? the whole head is sick, and the
6 whole heart faint. From the sole of the foot even unto
the head there is no soundness in it; *but* wounds, and
bruises, and festering sores: they have not been closed,
7 neither bound up, neither mollified with oil. Your
country is desolate; your cities are burned with fire;

---

2. This summons to hear is not uncommon in Hebrew poetry (cf. xxviii. 23, xxxii. 9). Here it is addressed to the heavens and the earth, as in Deut. xxxii. 1, which is evidently a reminiscence of this passage. This personification of the physical world and its varied objects is familiar to us in the O. T. Cf. the language of Judges v. 20, ix. 8–15 (Jotham's parable). Nature feels sympathy with human destiny and its events (Amos viii. 8; Joel i. 10, 12, &c.). Such personifications naturally arose in an age when animistic conceptions of the universe were universally prevalent.

The full force and pathetic emphasis of the Hebrew should be noted: 'Sons have I reared and brought up to fame, yet 'tis *they* who have rebelled against me.' The sin of Israel is not mere violation of an abstract law of morality. It is not merely immoral; it is irreligious, because it involves a *personal* relationship of antagonism to a Divine will and a holy Fatherhood.

4. have despised. The Hebrew is really stronger—'have done despite to' or 'spurned.'

5. Translate, 'on what part (of the body) will ye be smitten yet?' So Gesenius and Ewald (following the Vulg.) and recent commentaries. R. V. here follows the traditional rendering of LXX, Targ., and Pesh. The rendering we have adopted is better suited to the following clauses, 'continuing to backslide,' &c., and gives a more vivid sense. The nation exhibits a piteous spectacle—a body bruised and wounded in every part.

7. desolate: more strictly, 'a desolation.' The last clause

your land, strangers devour it in your presence, and it is
desolate, as overthrown by strangers. And the daughter 8
of Zion is left as a booth in a vineyard, as a lodge in a
garden of cucumbers, as a besieged city. Except the 9

---

should be rendered 'and a desolation like an overthrow by strangers.' This would certainly yield a good sense, though these words are suspected by Duhm and Marti to be a gloss, since the metrical arrangement of the verse is overweighed by an extra clause. The strangers or foreigners are the Assyrians, if we follow the less probable view that these verses reflect the circumstances of the invasion of Judah as well as the Philistine territory by Sennacherib in 701 B.C. On the other hand, Ewald has been followed by more recent scholars in preferring to read Sodom in place of *zārîm* (strangers), 'like the overthrow of Sodom.' The word for 'overthrow' in the original is so constantly employed in O. T. literature in the expression 'overthrow of Sodom' (and Gomorrha) (e.g. Amos iv. 11; Isa. xiii. 19; Jer. xlix. 18, l. 40; and Deut. xxix. 23 (22 Heb.); cf. Gen. xix. 25, 29), that we might well expect the occurrence of the same expression here, especially as we find Sodom mentioned almost immediately (in verse 9). The textual change from 'strangers' to 'Sodom' in the original Heb. is but slight, and the reading 'strangers' easily arose through the occurrence of the same word earlier in the verse.

8. daughter of Zion. In poetic style towns were frequently designated by the feminine collective term for all the inhabitants, 'daughter,' 'maiden' (virgin), or 'mother'; cf. x. 32; 2 Sam. xx. 19; Ps. xlv. 12 (13 Heb.), lxxxvii. 5 (LXX), cxxxvii. 8; Zech. ii. 7. 'Daughter of Zion' is appositional genitive = daughter, Zion.

The isolation of the city amid the desolated country whose towns were in the possession of the enemy or destroyed is vividly represented by the simile of a booth in a vineyard or a night bivouack in a cucumber field. A good illustration of this rude temporary shelter for field watchmen will be found in the Translation and Notes to Isaiah in the *SBOT.* (Cheyne), p. 162. Sennacherib's prism-inscription, col. iii. lines 13–24: 'I besieged 46 strong cities, fortresses and smaller towns of Hezekiah the Jew. . . . I besieged him like a caged bird in Jerusalem, his residence. . . . His towns which I had plundered I cut off from his land, gave them to Mitinti king of Ashdod, Padi king of Ekron . . .' is cited by those who refer this passage to 701 B.C. as illustration from the annals of the Assyrian conqueror. The original record, carefully inscribed in minute cuneiform characters on a six-sided cylinder, may be seen by the visitor, in a glass case in one of the long rooms on an upper floor of the British Museum.

Lord of hosts had left unto us a very small remnant, we should have been as Sodom, we should have been like unto Gomorrah.

10 Hear the word of the Lord, ye rulers of Sodom; give

9. a very small remnant. It is doubtful whether the adverbial phrase rendered 'very small' existed in the original Hebrew text in ancient times, for it is not translated by the old versions LXX, Pesh., and Vulg. The rendering of the R. V. and A. V. is based on the accentuation of the Massoretic Hebrew Bible, which connects this adverbial phrase with the conditional clause of the verse; but it might equally well be connected with the latter part or apodosis of the verse and rendered 'we should have been almost like Sodom ...' This would be more in accordance with Hebrew idiom (cf. Song of Songs iii. 4; 2 Sam. xix. 37). The rendering 'we should have been *soon* like ...' is not so probable (cf. Isa. xxvi. 20).

The expression **LORD of hosts** means the Lord (Yahweh) of the heavenly host or retinue of stars. These stars were regarded as celestial spirits who fought under Yahweh's leadership while the earthly armies of Israel fought below against the foes who were at once the enemies of Yahweh and of His chosen people. These stars fought in 'their high ways' in heaven against Sisera on Barak's side (Judges v. 20; cf. verse 4). This attendant retinue appears in Micaiah's vision (1 Kings xxii. 19), and co-operated with God in the work of creation (Job xxxviii. 4-7, called also 'sons of God'). We frequently find this expression 'Yahweh God of hosts,' or in its abbreviated form (as here) 'Yahweh (of) Hosts,' in the Hebrew prophets (Amos v. 27; Isa. vi. 3, &c.); but the origin of the expression belongs to a much earlier period than the eighth century, and goes back to the primitive times when Yahweh was regarded as pre-eminently the God of the atmosphere and storm whose abode was in heaven (cf. Isa. xl. 26).

10. rulers of Sodom. The word for 'ruler' (*Ḳâṣîn*) is not the ordinary term employed in Hebrew, and is probably a designation of lower rank than the 'judge' (*Shōfēṭ*)[1]. It corresponds to the 'village justice' or *Ḳâḍi* (the same word, virtually) de-

---

[1] It was a South Palestinian and Arabic word, whereas *Shōfēṭ* is Canaanite (Phoenician). Judges xi. 6, 11 show that the term *Ḳâṣîn* (properly signifying *one who decides*) was a title of considerable dignity, and was even applied to a leader in war. *Shōfēṭ*, as Moore points out (Judges, Introd. xi. foll.), means not only *judex*, but also *vindex*, 'defender,' 'deliverer.' It combines, however, in its prevalent meaning, the conceptions of *judging* and *ruling*.

ear unto the law of our God, ye people of Gomorrah.
To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto 11
me? saith the Lord: I am full of the burnt offerings of
rams, and the fat of fed beasts; and I delight not in the
blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he-goats. When ye 12
come to appear before me, who hath required this at

---

scribed by Doughty, *Arabia Deserta*, i. p. 145: 'The village justices handle no bribes nor for affection pervert justice, but they receive some small fee for their labour. Mûsa [a village justice] was a ḳorân lawyer, a candid, just soul, not common amongst Arabs; to him resorted even the nomad tribesmen about, for the determining of their differences out of "the word of Allah." . . . The *Kâḍi* in such townships appoints the ransom for every lesser crime and the price of blood.'

In the parallelism characteristic of Hebrew poetry, which occurs in this passage, the word 'law' means the same thing as the 'word of the Lord' or divine teaching that came to the prophet. The Hebrew word for 'law' (*Tôrah*) means in reality *instruction*, and in the days when Isaiah lived it meant either the teaching conveyed in the oracles of the prophet or the answers (or instructions) given by the priest (cf. Deut. xvii. 9-11). But when Hebrew law and custom came to be codified and written down, this body of enactments acquired the special and technical name of 'law' (*Tôrah*), and this became the signification attached to the word in post-exilian literature, e.g. Ps. xix. 8, cxix. 55, 136; Ezra vii. 6, 10, x. 3, &c. After the first canon, i.e. the Pentateuch, was formed (fourth century), Tôrah was the Hebrew name of the 'five books of Moses.' It is important not to force the later legal meaning of Tôrah into the present passage.

i. 11-17. God is weary of the merely external round of ceremonial.

12. to appear before me. This is based on the Massoretic punctuation of the Hebrew, which adopts the old tradition which appears in the LXX, ὀφθῆναι. But this punctuation involves us in a doubtful construction. It would be better to punctuate differently and render 'When ye come to see my face'; and we should probably follow the same course in Exod. xxiii. 15 and xxxiv. 20. The change involved in the Massoretic punctuation probably arose from the feeling which existed in early times and is reflected in Exod. xxxiii. 20, that to see God was the sure precursor of death; cf. chap. vi. 5 and Judges xiii. 22, 23. Yet this last passage and Exod. xxiii. 15, xxxiv. 20 indicates that the worshipper thought himself safe if he brought sacrificial gifts in his hands, and this pas-

13 your hand, to trample my courts? Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto me; new moon and sabbath, the calling of assemblies,—I cannot
14 away with iniquity and the solemn meeting. Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth: they
15 are a trouble unto me; I am weary to bear them. And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you: yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not
16 hear: your hands are full of blood. Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before
17 mine eyes; cease to do evil: learn to do well; seek judgement, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow.

18 Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as

---

sage in Isaiah shows that the hands of the worshippers were certainly not empty.

13. The word for **oblation** (*Minḥah*) meant in later post-exilian times vegetable or meal offering, e.g. in the Priestercodex (Lev. ii *passim*, vi. 7 foll., vii. 9), but in pre-exilian times, to which Isaiah belonged, it denoted both unbloody and bloody offerings. Thus in Gen. iv. 3 (Jahwist) it is applied both to Abel's offering and to that of Cain (cf. 1 Sam. ii. 17, xxvi. 19). Similarly, the word for **incense** meant in the days of Isaiah the smoke or vapour of the burning fat, while in the more elaborate post-exilian ritual it meant the smoke of the carefully compounded spices burned in the censer (Exod. xxx. 35; 2 Chron. ii. 3, xiii. 11).

solemn meeting: better, 'festal assembly.'

14. a trouble. Render more accurately: 'they have become a burden to me; I am weary of bearing them.'

15. when ye spread forth your hands. The attitude in which homage is expressed, whether to a deity or a human potentate (see representations on Egyptian monuments, *passim*).

17. Translate: 'learn to do right; seek after justice; admonish the oppressor; obtain justice for the orphan; plead the widow's cause.'

18. It is hardly possible to retain the rendering of A. V. or R. V. with due regard to the context and the connexion of

wool. If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the 19
good of the land: but if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be 20
devoured with the sword: for the mouth of the LORD
hath spoken it.

How is the faithful city become an harlot! she that 21
was full of judgement! righteousness lodged in her, but
now murderers. Thy silver is become dross, thy wine 22

---

thought. Cheyne would translate, 'they *may be* white as snow,' thus giving the Heb. imperfect a *potential* force (cf. Gen. ii. 16 and Gesenius-Kautzsch^{26}, § 107. 4^{b}). But it is more probable that we should regard the verse as the expression of prophetic irony: 'Come, let us urge our pleas against one another: though your sins be as scarlet, let them be white as snow! . . .' God and His people confront one another like parties in a suit. Some would render the apodosis as an ironical question, 'Are they to be white as snow?' but there is no sign of an interrogation, and it would therefore be better to render it as suggested above: 'let them be white as snow!' as if such a thing were possible, while your life is corrupt, your worship hollow and insincere, and your sins unrepented of.

20. shall be devoured with the sword. Olshausen, § 250*b*, would explain the construction: 'Ye shall be made to devour the sword.' Duhm would simplify the grammar by adopting another punctuation, and render, 'Ye shall devour the sword'; but this is too harsh a conception, and Ps. cii. 9 (Heb. 10, devour ashes) is no adequate parallel. Unless we follow the hint of the LXX and slightly alter the text, and read 'the sword shall devour *them*,' which is an ordinary metaphor (2 Sam. ii. 26), but involving a somewhat abrupt change of person, the proposed punctuation of Gunkel (*Schöpfung u. Chaos*, p. 161) has most to commend it: *Ḥōrebh tôklû*, 'ye shall eat dry waste' (or perhaps 'desolation'), a powerful metaphor, in which the exact antithetic balance of clauses with verse 19 is maintained.

21. The metaphor of Zion the harlot is an echo of the parabolic episode of Gomer bath-Diblaim in Hos. i–iii, in which the prophet of the Northern Kingdom portrays the infidelities of Ephraim. The same idea recurs in the elaborate allegory of Ezek. xvi. The underlying conception of Yahweh the husband of His people (personified as fem.) meets us again in Rev. xxi. 2, 9, in which the *New* Jerusalem is the bride adorned for her husband, the Lamb of God. The idea belongs probably to a later development of old Semitic culture, when man became the lord or owner of the woman (see Barton, *Semitic Origins*, pp. 40–59).

23 mixed with water. Thy princes are rebellious, and companions of thieves; every one loveth gifts, and followeth after rewards: they judge not the fatherless, neither doth the cause of the widow come unto them.

24 Therefore saith the Lord, the LORD of hosts, the Mighty One of Israel, Ah, I will ease me of mine adver-
25 saries, and avenge me of mine enemies: and I will turn my hand upon thee, and throughly purge away thy dross,
26 and will take away all thy tin: and I will restore thy judges as at the first, and thy counsellors as at the beginning: afterward thou shalt be called The city of righteous-
27 ness, the faithful city. [I?] Zion shall be redeemed

---

22. mixed. Perhaps we ought to render '*weakened* with water,' but the meaning of the original is doubtful.

23. Thy princes are rebellious. This is a literally exact rendering, but it does not reproduce the punning of the original. Hebrew writers are prone to this, especially Isaiah, who loves these alliterations (cf. v. 1, 7; also Gen. i. 2, iv. 14, xliii. 12 (*mishneh . . . mishgeh*)). 'Princes are unprincipled' hardly conveys the sense as fully as Cheyne's 'rulers are unruly.' The expression may have been proverbial or an echo of Hos. ix. 15.

24. Translate: 'Ah! I will have my satisfaction on my adversaries and take vengeance on my foes.' The word rendered **therefore** is often employed by Isaiah to introduce a threat of impending ill.

25. Render with R. V. (marg.), 'bring my hand again upon thee.' There are to be further chastisements in store, though the past has been full of them (cf. verses 5 foll.).

Translate: 'that I may purge as with lye thy dross.' The word *bôr*, here (like the fuller form *bôrîth*) in R. V. (marg.) rendered 'lye' (in modern English 'soap'), consisted of a wood or other vegetable ash (see *Enc. Bibl.*, under *Soap*), with which objects were cleansed sometimes in conjunction with oil. The reading seems to be supported by LXX. It is not improbable, however, that we ought to read *bakkûr* (instead of *kabbôr*): 'that I may smelt away *in a furnace* thy dross.' This reading is better adapted to the verb employed, and yields a clear sense in harmony with the following parallel clause: 'and remove all thy base alloy' (so Cheyne and Marti).

Verses 27 and 28 have been regarded by Duhm, Cheyne, and Marti as the added moralizing reflections of a later age. They

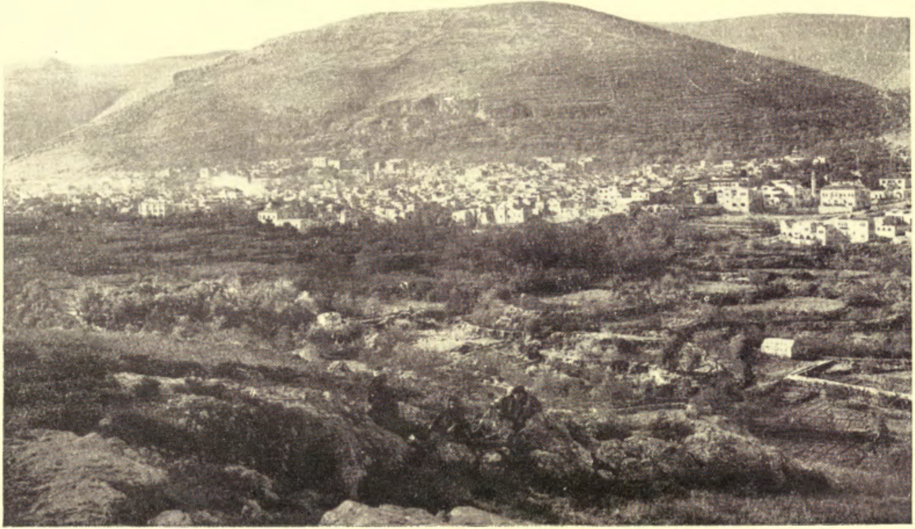


Photo: Photochrom Co.

SHECHEM AND MOUNT GERIZIM

with judgement, and her converts with righteousness.
But the destruction of the transgressors and the sinners 28
shall be together, and they that forsake the LORD shall
be consumed. For they shall be ashamed of the oaks 29
which ye have desired, and ye shall be confounded for
the gardens that ye have chosen. For ye shall be as an 30
oak whose leaf fadeth, and as a garden that hath no
water. And the strong shall be as tow, and his work as 31
a spark; and they shall both burn together, and none
shall quench them.

---

certainly assume a somewhat detached relation to the preceding verses 21-26, and lack the bold and vivid metaphors which there meet us. Moreover, the language reminds us of the later sections of this book (xl-lxvi), composed in exilian or post-exilian times.

27. her converts. The LXX renders 'her captives' (*ἡ αἰχμαλωσία αὐτῆς*), a translation which is based on a different punctuation of the same Hebrew text, but internal considerations do not support it. The verse refers to moral renewal through Divine judgments. The expression 'converts' fully harmonizes with this conception.

29-31. A denunciation of tree cultus. For **oak** (or **oaks**) read *terebinth* (*terebinths*). On sacred trees among the ancient Semites see Robertson Smith, *RS.*^{2}, pp. 184-196, and 'Nature-Worship' in *Enc. Bibl.* §§ 2, 3. One prominent form of tree-worship became associated with the cult of Asherah (distinct from, though sometimes confounded with, Ashtoreth and Astarte). For a general review of the subject see Bruce-Taylor, in *Expository Times*, June 1903, 'Traces of Tree-worship in the O. T.' Cf. Wellhausen, *Reste arabischen Heidentums*, p. 104 foll.; and Baudissin's article on 'Asherah' in *Realencycl. für die protest. Kirche*^{3}, ii. p. 157 foll. On *Terebinth*, consult the article under this name in Hastings' *DB.* vol. iv, and on *Gardens*, article under the name in *Enc. Bibl.*

29. Render: 'For they shall be ashamed of the terebinths for which ye longed, and ye shall feel chagrin at the gardens in which ye delighted.'

30. Render: 'like a terebinth withering in its leaf.'

31. his work. This is evidently the right rendering based on a slight alteration of the punctuation of the Hebrew text. The Massoretic text is punctuated so as to signify 'his maker.' LXX, however, follows the real sense of the passage, which evidently requires us to read *po'ᵒlô*, 'his work.'

2 [**R**] The word that Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem.

CHAPTERS II–V.

ii. **1.** We come to another superscription. As we have already seen, these redactional elements standing at the head of books, sections, or documents were added much later than the words which follow. It has been suggested that this superscription has been removed from its original position, and that it originally stood at the head of chap. ii. 6, and that the brief poem, chap. ii. 2–4, originally stood at the close of the group of oracles collected together in chap. i, forming a pendant to this small collection (Lagarde, *Sem.* i. 7; Stade, *Gesch. Isr.* i. p. 608; and Cheyne, Introd., p. 15 foll.). This view is supported by Marti. But the grounds for this view are, in the opinion of the present writer, quite inadequate, and altogether fail to explain how the superscription could have been transferred to its present position. It probably forms the heading to a small collection of prophecies, chaps. ii–iv, to which chap. v (another smaller collection of oracles) came to be attached, and the brief poem, ii. 2–4, was inserted as a prelude.

This brief poem we shall now proceed to examine. It has formed the battle-ground of critics during the past century, and it cannot be said that there is any unanimity in the opinions of living scholars. The problem is complicated by two facts: (1) the same passage occurs in a slightly varied and longer form in Mic. iv. 1–4; (2) Joel iii. 10 (with other parallels) is obviously an echo from Isa. ii. 4 (Mic. iv. 3). How are these literary facts to be explained? Various theories have been advanced: (1) the passage was originally composed by Micah; (2) by Isaiah; (3) by some older poet and embodied in the collections of Isaiah and Micah respectively; (4) composed by Joel; (5) composed by some later, probably post-exilian, writer. This last view is that to which modern critics seem to incline. (1) was the theory advocated by Michaelis, Gesenius, Caspari, and Delitzsch. According to the last it forms in Micah the obverse to the preceding threatenings. Also he finds in it traces of Micah's style, e.g. 'house of Jacob' is such an expression as Micah would adopt, since Jacob is his favourite name for Israel; 'many peoples' (verse 3) is another phrase which meets us in Micah (iv. 11, 13, v. 6 foll., Heb.). These are not very decisive arguments, and Cheyne (Introd. p. 10) calls attention to the fact that most of the parallels are found in disputed portions of Micah. Moreover, the expression itself is too ordinary and general; and lastly, we have no hint elsewhere in his oracles of the conversion of the nations. According to Jer. xxvi. 18 the threatening (Mic. iii. 12, with which

[I] And it shall come to pass in the latter days, that 2

---

iv. 1–4 is contrasted) was composed in the days of Ḥezeḳiah, but this fact can scarcely be said to affect the argument one way or the other. (2) is the view still held by Duhm, who considers that its finely rounded six-lined strophes resemble other poetic passages composed by the prophet (xi. 1–8; xxxii. 1–5, 15–20). While he acknowledges that no cogent proof can be alleged in favour of Isaianic authorship, nothing can be brought forward on the ground of language against it. In his opinion this, as well as the other passages, were composed by the prophet as a swan-song in his old age. They were not delivered to the public, but communicated to a small company of disciples. On the other hand, Cheyne is exceedingly sceptical about these swan-songs (Introd. p. 14). (3) was the theory adopted by some of the older critics—Knobel, Ewald, and Dillmann—and more recently by Driver, König, and Kittel, that we have here a fragment of an ancient oracle. This was formerly the view of Cheyne, who acknowledged in his 'Bampton Lectures' (pub. 1891) that this was an 'old prophecy.' The same opinion was held in 1884 by Cornill (*ZATW.* p. 88, footnote); but both scholars have since changed their views and regard the passage as post-Isaianic. It is, in fact, difficult to assign this beautiful fragment to an earlier date than the lifetime of the prophet. The larger conception of Divine working and of Israel's destiny characteristic of the days of the Exile and the Deutero-Isaiah (cf. Isa. xlix. 6) was beyond the range of any but the greatest and most original mind. In other words, it was possible to no one in the eighth century but Isaiah himself, the author of chap. ix. 1–7. (4) The reference of the poem to Joel was a natural surmise based on the remarkable parallels in language in Joel i. 7, 12, ii. 22 ('vine and fig-tree'), also Joel iii. 1, as well as the still more significant obverse, iii. 10. This opinion was held by Hitzig, who attributed the oracles of Joel to the ninth century B.C. This view, however, has no longer been held tenable. The grounds for the opinion of modern critics, who now with fair unanimity reject the views of Credner and Hitzig and place the prophecies of Joel in the fifth century B.C., will be found in Driver's *LOT.*, and appear to the present writer convincing. (5) Cornill, Cheyne, and Marti would assign an exilian or post-exilian date to this brief oracle. Though Joel is assigned by recent critics, and with good grounds, to a post-exilian date when the Greek race (Javan) had become familiar to Palestine (Joel iii. 6), the standpoint of the writer was too exclusive to render it likely that he could have originated this beautiful poem. On the other hand, the literary character of the prophet renders it likely that he quoted from it. The age which produced Isa. xlix. 6 might well have originated Isa. ii. 2–4, or the latter passage may be based on the ideas of the former.

the mountain of the LORD's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the

---

On the whole our judgment inclines to the view still held by Duhm (2), to which we have called attention—that this fragment was composed by Isaiah towards the close of his life. Stade's contention that the ideas here represented are not those which belong to the lifetime of the prophet is merely to argue for a foregone conclusion. It fixes by a hard and fast *a priori* scheme what each century and all the writers who lived in it may or may not think or say. No one may climb to the mountain tops to greet the dawn! But such a mode of handling literature becomes futile when we come to deal with a great personality like Isaiah, to whom the greatness of Jerusalem and of the Lord of Hosts ('Israel's Holy One') who dwelt there was a fundamental conception. Much has been made by Staerk of the phrase in Hebrew rendered 'in the latter days,' which he considers to belong to a later date than the eighth century. It is quite possible that this expression, both here and in Hos. iii. 5, Gen. xlix. 1, &c., is due to the hand of a later redactor, but even of this we cannot be quite certain. In the Assyrian of the age of Isaiah we have almost exactly the same expression, *ina aḥrat ûmî* = 'in future times' (see Schrader, *COT*. i. p. 140, on Gen. xlix. 1). It may well, therefore, be assumed that it existed in Hebrew and was not 'first formed during the Exile,' as Staerk supposes (in *ZATW*. 1891, pp. 247–251). This argument is advanced by Cheyne himself (Introd. p. 11 foll., footn. 2). *Lastly*, it must be remembered that the idea of exile for God's people had been brought vividly before the mind of the prophet by the events of 721 B.C., when the inhabitants of the northern kingdom had been deported. That a like fate awaited Judah in the course of time was only too probable (Isa. vii. 18–20, viii. 8). That a writer like Isaiah, the author of the prophecy of Immanuel, would leave the problem of the ultimate future of Jerusalem unsolved is neither probable nor credible. Prophecies like Isa. ix. 5 foll. and xi. 1–9 would be the natural, reassuring utterances of the poet-seer, addressed to his people as the dark clouds of foreign conquest loomed on the horizon or seemed to roll away. It is needful at this early stage to state at full length the critical attitude adopted in this commentary towards some of the literary problems that await us in the earlier chapters (i–xxxix) of the Prophecies of Isaiah. Comp. introductory notes to ix. 1 and xi. 1 foll.

2. The opening of this fragment resembles many others (vii. 18, 21, xi. 10, 11, &c.) and suggests the hand of a redactor. The writer contemplates a great physical change; the temple-mountain is to stand in appearance at least at the summit of the mountains

hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many peoples 3
shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the
mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob;
and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his
paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the
word of the LORD from Jerusalem. And he shall judge 4
between the nations, and shall reprove many peoples:
and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and
their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up
sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any
more.

O house of Jacob, come ye, and let us walk in the light 5
of the LORD. For thou hast forsaken thy people the 6

---

of Jerusalem and tower above all. LXX both here and in the Micah passage read 'mountain of the Lord' only. Probably Ezek. xl. 2 is an echo of these passages.

3. Render more in accordance with idiom, 'that he may teach us . . . and we may walk.' Here again, as in i. 9, we notice that **law** means properly 'instruction' and stands in parallelism with the 'word of the Lord.'

4. For **reprove** read 'give decisions.' The subject of the verb is of course Yahweh in his capacity as the Divine Judge.

The metal point of the spear is to be forged into a reaping-knife[1]. War shall be no more; cf. Isa xi. 6 foll. The picture is completed in Micah (verse 4) by an idyllic touch of peace and security, every man dwelling in safety under his own vine and fig-tree.

5. This verse is evidently based on an abbreviation of Mic. iv. 5, which probably formed an integral part of the original prophecy. Here it seems to form a link to what follows.

6–21 form probably a single oracle, of which verses 10, 17, and 21 are the refrain. It contains threatenings of Divine judgment amid the pride, prosperity and luxury of the nation. There is no hint here of foreign invasion (as we find in iii. 25, 26). Therefore it is fairly probable that this oracle (the text of which is disturbed and interpolated in some passages) belongs to the

---

[1] A good illustration of such a reaping-knife or sickle, curved in form, may be seen in *Enc. Bibl.* 'Agriculture,' vol. i, cols. 80, 81. (Note especially the specimen discovered at Tell el Ḥesi (Lachish).)

house of Jacob, because they be filled *with customs* from
the east, and *are* soothsayers like the Philistines, and
7 they strike hands with the children of strangers. Their
land also is full of silver and gold, neither is there any
end of their treasures; their land also is full of horses,
8 neither is there any end of their chariots. Their land
also is full of idols; they worship the work of their own
9 hands, that which their own fingers have made. And the
mean man is bowed down, and the great man is brought
10 low: therefore forgive them not. Enter into the rock, and
hide thee in the dust, from before the terror of the Lord,
11 and from the glory of his majesty. The lofty looks of
man shall be brought low, and the haughtiness of men
shall be bowed down, and the Lord alone shall be exalted
12 in that day. For there shall be a day of the Lord of

---

earliest delivered by Isaiah, not improbably, as Marti suggests, soon after 740 B.C., when Uzziah, according to 2 Chron. xxvi. 6–15 (which probably rests upon a historical basis), had materially increased the military prestige and material well-being of Judah (see 'Uzziah' in Hastings' *DB.*). He had also regained for Judah Elath, the port on the Elanitic gulf of the Red Sea through which foreign products found their way into his kingdom. These conditions of national prosperity are reflected in this section, and the reference to the 'Tarshish ships' in verse 16 is significant.

6. LXX render: 'He hath forsaken his people,' based, as Duhm and Marti consider, on a more correct text. The translation should continue: 'for they are full of divination from the East, and of soothsayers like the Philistines, and are crowded with the children of foreigners.' By the East we might understand North Arabia or Babylonia; see Hastings' *DB.* article 'Soothsayer,' vol. iv, p. 600 *ad init.* The 'children of foreigners' mean slaves. On the rendering 'crowded' see Hastings' *DB.* 'Servant,' vol. iv, p. 463, footnote.

9. For **the mean man** read 'mankind,' and for the **great man** read simply 'a man.'

10. Here we have the refrain preserved in its fuller form in the LXX, which supplies the missing line in our Hebrew text 'when He arises to shake the earth' (cf. verses 19 and 21).

12. a day of the LORD is an oft-recurring O. T. phrase

hosts upon all that is proud and haughty, and upon all
that is lifted up; and it shall be brought low: and upon 13
all the cedars of Lebanon, that are high and lifted up,
and upon all the oaks of Bashan; and upon all the high 14
mountains, and upon all the hills that are lifted up; and 15
upon every lofty tower, and upon every fenced wall;
and upon all the ships of Tarshish, and upon all pleasant 16
imagery. And the loftiness of man shall be bowed down, 17
and the haughtiness of men shall be brought low: and

---

meaning a day of Divine judgment or visitation of wrath in the form of calamity, 'But judgment is not an end in itself; it is only in order to redemption, and behind the storm of judgment there always rises clear the day of salvation'; see the late Dr. Davidson's article on the Eschatology of the O. T. *sub voce* 'Eschatology' in Hastings' *DB.* pp. 735 foll.

16. The 'Tarshish ships' meant originally those which sailed from Mediterranean ports, especially from Tyre, to Tartessus, a commercial city frequented especially by the Phoenician merchantmen; cf. Ezek. xxvii. 12, 25 (oracle on Tyre)[1]. The phrase then came, like our word 'Indiaman,' to mean the larger vessels of merchandise. Then in 1 Kings xxii. 49 we read that these vessels made their way to Ophir. We bear in mind that about this time (739 B.C.?) Elath in the gulf of Akaba was in the possession of Judah. It is almost certain that both vessels and crews were Phoenician. See *Hebrew Antiquities* (R.T.S.), pp. 134, 135 foll.

The rendering **pleasant imagery** is as good as any that has been suggested. But the word for 'imagery' in Hebrew is very obscure. The context indicates that it may refer to the images carved on the prow of the vessels. So LXX ἐπὶ πᾶσαν θέαν πλοίων κάλλους.

---

[1] See *Enc. Bibl.* under 'Tarshish,' where the various theories as to the identification are given. It is to be noted that the name is absent in LXX at this passage, and in xxiii. 1, 6, 11 is represented by Carthage. This, however, does not necessarily militate against the identification with Tartessus in Spain, since Carthage in the original Phoenician means 'New Town,' and this would be a natural designation of a new Phoenician colony, which Tartessus probably was. Thus the 'new town' of Citium bore this name (see Winckler in *KAT.*^{3} p. 128).

18 the LORD alone shall be exalted in that day. And the
19 idols shall utterly pass away. And men shall go into the
caves of the rocks, and into the holes of the earth, from
before the terror of the LORD, and from the glory of his
20 majesty, when he ariseth to shake mightily the earth. In
that day a man shall cast away his idols of silver, and his
idols of gold, which they made for him to worship, to
21 the moles and to the bats; to go into the caverns of the
rocks, and into the clefts of the ragged rocks, from before
the terror of the LORD, and from the glory of his majesty,
22 when he ariseth to shake mightily the earth. [R] Cease
ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils: for wherein
is he to be accounted of?

3 [I] For, behold, the Lord, the LORD of hosts, doth take

---

18. This verse seems to be a brief fragment. Not improbably several verses have been lost at the close of this remarkable poem.

20. We pass suddenly from poetry to prose. Perhaps the verse is the addition of some scribe suggested by the caves and holes of the earth (verse 19), into which the terror-stricken men fled from the terrifying manifestations of the Divine power casting the vain idols of His worship to the moles and bats which tenanted this dark abode.

22 is omitted in LXX, and is probably the pious ejaculation of a devout scribe who added this comment. For **wherein,** &c., read: 'at what value is he to be accounted?'

iii. 1–12, 13–15, 16—iv. 1 constitute a group of oracles which belong to yet later and more degenerate days. So serious does the state of the people, the oppression of the poor by the rich and the luxurious frivolity of the women, appear to the prophet that he sees an impending dissolution of the state, the destruction of the leaders, ruin and impoverishment, and, last of all, foreign invasion and loss of the male population. It is not easy to assign a definite date to this chapter. We are evidently surrounded by the conditions which prevailed in the days of Aḥaz. Verse 16 points to a state of luxury existing among the upper classes of society, and verse 12 to the undue influence exercised on the course of events by the women of the king's harem. Is the youthful Ḥezekiah, just placed on the throne, referred to in the same verse as the child-despot? If so we may assume the year

away from Jerusalem and from Judah stay and staff,
the whole stay of bread, and the whole stay of water; the 2
mighty man, and the man of war; the judge, and the
prophet, and the diviner, and the ancient; the captain of 3
fifty, and the honourable man, and the counsellor, and
the cunning artificer, and the skilful enchanter. And I 4
will give children to be their princes, and babes shall
rule over them. And the people shall be oppressed, 5
every one by another, and every one by his neighbour:
the child shall behave himself proudly against the ancient,
and the base against the honourable. When a man shall 6
take hold of his brother in the house of his father, *saying*,
Thou hast clothing, be thou our ruler, and let this ruin
be under thy hand: in that day shall he lift up *his voice*, 7

---

726 B. C., when Judah had fairly recovered from the Syro-Ephraimite war, as a not improbable date. See Introduction, pp. 23 foll. Verses 1–12 are in the form of eight-lined stanzas.

1. For **the whole** read 'every.'

3. honourable man, i. e. man in high favour. Instead of **cunning artificer,** &c., render 'skilled magician' and 'expert charmer.' We find here portrayed the same condition of things as in ii. 6. Among the most important leaders of society was the soothsayer and the magician. The soothsayer sought to ascertain the will of the Deity in all the emergencies of life whether public or private. The magician sought to control that will. With reference to the soothsayer's art, 'It was regarded not merely as permissible, but as essential to piety and the security of the state' (Bevan in *Critical Review*, 1899, April, p. 143).

4. For **babes** read 'wilfulness.' Cf. verse 12.

5. Translate: 'The people shall oppress one another, man against man, and one against another.'

6. his brother (like 'his neighbour') is the Hebrew idiom for English 'another.'

house of his father means ancestral abode.

clothing is too general a term for the original *Simlah*, which was the broad and flowing *outer* garment or 'mantle' ordinarily worn, like the Greek *himation* (the rendering in LXX). The **ruin** here means the ruined social fabric of the state. This is made clear in verse 8. On the word **ruler** see note on i. 10.

7. The perilous offer is declined. He loudly protests that he

saying, I will not be an healer; for in my house is neither
bread nor clothing: ye shall not make me ruler of the
8 people. For Jerusalem is ruined, and Judah is fallen:
because their tongue and their doings are against the
9 LORD, to provoke the eyes of his glory. The shew of
their countenance doth witness against them; and they
declare their sin as Sodom, they hide it not. Woe unto
their soul! for they have rewarded evil unto themselves.
10 Say ye of the righteous, that *it shall be* well *with him*: for
11 they shall eat the fruit of their doings. Woe unto the
wicked! *it shall be* ill *with him*: for the reward of his
12 hands shall be given him. As for my people, children
are their oppressors, and women rule over them. O my
people, they which lead thee cause thee to err, and destroy
13 the way of thy paths. The LORD standeth up to plead,
14 and standeth to judge the peoples. The LORD will enter
into judgement with the elders of his people, and the

---

will not be surgeon or 'binder up' of a state so desperately wounded (cf. i. 5). His poverty was so great that in his ancestral inheritance he had not the wherewithal to maintain himself as a ruler (*Kasîn*).

9. Instead of **shew of their countenance** read with R.V. (marg.): 'Their respecting of persons.' Here as elsewhere the gross partiality of the judges of Judah is rebuked; cf. i. 17, 23; Amos v. 10-12 (in reference to Israel); Mic. ii. 2, 3.

their soul, according to Hebrew (and Arabic) idiom, means 'themselves.'

12. Translate: '**As for my people,** their despot is a boy (child).' There is no need to follow LXX, who with a different punctuation of the Hebrew word rendered **women** translate it by 'usurers' (*ἀπαιτοῦντες*). Our punctuated Hebrew text yields a good enough sense; for the presence and power of women in society is indicated later on in verse 16, and the mention of them here is thoroughly appropriate and probable.

13. Yahweh is introduced as judge. He presents Himself before His people to conduct the trial, yet not as plaintiff, but as judge. It is otherwise i. 18. The reading 'His people' is preferable to **the peoples** of the Massoretic Hebrew text, represented in R.V. The former has the support of the LXX.

princes thereof: It is ye that have eaten up the vineyard;
the spoil of the poor is in your houses: what mean ye 15
that ye crush my people, and grind the face of the poor?
saith the Lord, the LORD of hosts.

Moreover the LORD said, Because the daughters of 16
Zion are haughty, and walk with stretched forth necks
and wanton eyes, walking and mincing as they go, and
making a tinkling with their feet: therefore the Lord will 17
smite with a scab the crown of the head of the daughters
of Zion, and the LORD will lay bare their secret parts.
[I?] In that day the Lord will take away the bravery 18

---

iii. 16—iv. 1. The denunciation of the prophet turns from the men to the women of the upper classes of society. It takes the form of six-lined stanzas.

16. Translate: 'walk with outstretched necks and ogling (or leering) with their eyes': the word rendered 'ogling' or 'leering' may also mean 'winking.' So it seems to be understood by the LXX (ἐν νεύμασιν ὀφθαλμῶν). The tinkling with the feet as the women walked trippingly along was due to either the anklets or the step-chains (ankle-chains, R. V.) of verses 18, 20. 'Anklets of solid gold or silver are worn by some ladies. . . . They are of course very heavy, and knocking together as the wearer walks make a ringing noise; hence it is said in a song, "The ringing of thy anklets has deprived me of my reason"' (Lane, *Modern Egyptians*). Muḥammad, however, in Ḳorân, Sur. xxiv. 32, discouraged such vulgar display, and recommended that women 'beat not with their feet that their hidden ornaments may be perceived.'

Verses 18-23 are no longer in the form of the six-lined stanza of the verses that immediately precede, but are simple, prose commencing with the formula **In that day.** Duhm, Cheyne, and Marti consider that such an enumeration is quite alien to the style of Isaiah, and it certainly does seem a strange contrast. But is it not possible that this was intended to express the prophet's scorn of all these paraphernalia of feminine frivolity, which are utterly unworthy of poetry? It must be remembered that enumerations are not altogether foreign to Isaiah's style; cf. ii. 12-16, iii. 2, 3: 'In that day (viz. the impending day of Divine visitation which the prophet has throughout in view) Yahweh will take away the adornment of the anklets, the little suns and the little moons.' The 'little suns' and 'little moons' were doubtless used as amulets, and had a magical significance.

19 of their anklets, and the cauls, and the crescents; the pen-
20 dants, and the bracelets, and the mufflers ; the headtires,
and the ankle chains, and the sashes, and the perfume
21 boxes, and the amulets ; the rings, and the nose jewels;
22 the festival robes, and the mantles, and the shawls, and the

---

The latter were crescents, and were worn hanging as a necklace. In Judges viii. 21 we read that they were carried on the necks of the camels of the two Midianite kings. They were used as a charm. Lane observes that horses often wear appendages consisting of a few verses of the Korân enclosed in cases of metal or leather. Among modern Arabs the *hilâl* is a crescent of diamonds set in gold or silver, resembling in form the phase of the moon when between two and three nights old. It is regarded as an effective remedy against the Evil Eye, for the *hilâl* or new moon is the image of growing prosperity (Delitzsch).

19. 'The ear-drops, the bracelets, and the veils.' The enumeration does not follow any method or order. The ear-drops were also worn by males. Lane, in describing the modern counterparts, says 'it consists of a drop suspended within a wreath hanging from a sprig,' sometimes consisting of diamonds, sometimes emeralds or rubies set in gold. In ancient times glass may have been used, for we know that it was manufactured in Egypt in early times (Wilkinson, ii. 140-152, &c. ; Pliny, *Hist. Nat.* xxxvi. 64). Moreover, glass bowls have been discovered in Nineveh as well as glass ornaments in Babylon (Layard, *Nineveh and Babylon*, abridged edition, pp. 65, 290).

20. It is not easy to determine the probable form of the 'headtire.' It may have consisted of bands made of gold and silver thread which passed across the forehead from one ear to the other (Delitzsch), or it may have assumed other forms; see *Hebrew Antiquities* (R.T.S.), p. 50. We learn from Isa. lxi. 10 that it was worn on festive occasions, as weddings.

The 'girdles' (sashes) and the 'scent-cases' probably went together, the latter suspended from the former. Probably the scent-cases contained some preparation of the balsam perfume which we find mentioned in verse 24. There were also other varieties of perfume, as we learn from Ps. xlv (myrrh, aloes, and cassia, another list in Song of Solomon iv. 14).

The amulets were probably ear-rings inscribed with devices magical and protective. It is significant that Jacob buried these (Gen. xxxv. 4) under a terebinth. See *Enc. Bibl.* 'amulet.'

21. 'The finger-rings and nose-rings,' *Hebrew Antiquities*, p. 52 (see illustrations).

22. For **satchels** read 'pockets.'

satchels; the hand mirrors, and the fine linen, and the tur- 23
bans, and the veils. [I] And it shall come to pass, that 24
instead of sweet spices there shall be rottenness; and
instead of a girdle a rope; and instead of well set hair bald-
ness; and instead of a stomacher a girding of sackcloth:
branding instead of beauty. Thy men shall fall by the 25
sword, and thy mighty in the war. And her gates shall 26
lament and mourn; and she shall be desolate and sit upon
the ground. And seven women shall take hold of one man 4

---

23. The Hebrew word rendered 'hand-mirrors' comes in the midst of articles of clothing. LXX render by 'articles of fine linen' (*byssus*). Something of the kind was probably intended. Peiser, *ZATW*. (xvii. (1897) p. 349), compares the Subatu *gu-li-nu* of Babylonian contract tablets; *gulinu* is almost the same word as the Hebrew in this passage, and means a kind of garment. The rendering 'hand-mirror' should probably be abandoned.

24. The catalogue of finery is concluded. It shall all come to a sorry end: the tragic note is once more sounded. The scene changes from the glitter of the ear-drops and the head-tires, and the clatter of the anklets of a fashionable lady, as she trips along the streets of Jerusalem, to a far different scene of slaughter, mourning, captivity, and degradation. The poetic measure is resumed.

The tragic contrasts are ruthlessly set forth. *Pethîgîl* seems to mean some stately robe. 'Instead of a stately robe, girding of sackcloth.' Rottenness, disease, and penury that cause the hair to fall off; the sackcloth of mourning for the dead; ropes round the body and branding upon the fair faces and arms of the captives taken from the beleaguered towns—this is the lot that awaits the once powerful and gay. We are strongly reminded of the language and tone of chap. xxii. 12 foll.

25–26 complete the picture of the slaughtered garrison and the depopulated town, probably Zion, which is here personified and addressed in verse 25, and described in the 3rd person in verse 26 as sitting in silent anguish on the ground.

iv. **1** is a grim portrayal of one of the consequences of war and its depopulation. The women vastly outnumber the male population, and are willing to dispense even with the rights of maintenance by the husband if he will only save them from the dishonour of unwedded life and childlessness (cf. Isa. liv. 4 foll.; Judges xi. 38; Gen. xxx. 23; 1 Sam. i. 5–10). This seems to be the real meaning of the passage. There is no proof that the seven women

in that day, saying, We will eat our own bread, and wear
our own apparel: only let us be called by thy name;
take thou away our reproach.

2 In that day shall the branch of the LORD be beautiful
and glorious, and the fruit of the land shall be excellent
3 and comely for them that are escaped of Israel. And it
shall come to pass, that he that is left in Zion, and he
that remaineth in Jerusalem, shall be called holy, even
every one that is written among the living in Jerusalem:
4 when the Lord shall have washed away the filth of the
daughters of Zion, and shall have purged the blood of
Jerusalem from the midst thereof, by the spirit of judge-
5 ment, and by the spirit of burning. [PE] And the LORD
will create over the whole habitation of mount Zion, and
over her assemblies, a cloud and smoke by day, and the
shining of a flaming fire by night: for over all the glory
6 *shall be spread* a canopy. And there shall be a pavilion

---

belong to the same aristocratic rank as those mentioned in verses 16 foll., and that they desire protection from their previous forlorn condition of humiliation as Duhm supposes. Their protested desire of self-maintenance contradicts this view.

eat our bread means, according to Hebrew idiom, 'earn our living' (Gen. iii. 19; Amos vii. 12).

2–6. A brief idyll respecting Zion in the future, purified and made glorious by the visible presence of Yahweh, comes like a rainbow and sunshine after the storm of the preceding chapter.

There has been considerable discussion as to the meaning of the 'shoot' or 'sprout of Yahweh' which is to 'become a beauty and an honour.' According to the traditional view represented by Targ., Kimḥi, Hengstenberg, Delitzsch, Driver, and Lagarde, this phrase is a designation of the Messiah. It is true that Zech. iii. 8, vi. 12 use this expression 'sprout' or 'branch of Yahweh' in the sense indicated, on the basis of the same conception and phraseology in Jer. xxiii. 5, xxxiii. 5 ('righteous sprout') associated with the posterity of David, but the parallelism entirely forbids this interpretation of the expression here. The same argument disposes of other explanations. We can therefore understand 'sprout of Yahweh' only to mean the fruit of the for a shadow in the day-time from the heat, and for a refuge and for a covert from storm and from rain.

[1] Let me sing for my wellbeloved a song of my beloved 5

land; not of the cultivated land, but of the *un*cultivated land, i. e. it is the spontaneous product of the soil (cf. Jer. xxxi. 12), in the golden Messianic age that is to come. He who remains in Jerusalem a survivor of the last calamities of Divine judgment is 'recorded for life' in Jerusalem. We are reminded of 'the book of remembrance' in Mal. iii. 16, and of the 'book of the living,' Exod. xxxii. 32 foll.[1] [1 Sam. xxv. 29]. The O. T. is full of images of terrestrial fruitfulness in the Messianic age: cf. Jer. xxxi. 12; Isa. lv. 13; Joel iii. 18.

There are many recent critics, e. g. Duhm and Marti, who regard chap. iv. 2-6 as a late eschatological discourse not composed by Isaiah. This is probably true of the concluding verses 5, 6, which are evidently based on the narrative of Israel's wanderings in the desert, especially Exod. xiii. 21, xxiv. 15-18. The word for 'create' cannot certainly be pressed as a sign of lateness (i. e. as being a post-exilian expression), since the reading is doubtful. LXX suggest the reading which may be rendered 'And there shall come and shall be,' &c., instead of the Massoretic text, which has 'And Yahweh shall create . . .'

CHAPTER V.

This chapter has no heading, and stands isolated. It cannot be connected with the following chapter, which evidently formed the beginning of another small collection. On the other hand, chap. iv obviously formed originally the conclusion of a distinct group of oracles, chaps. ii–iv. We may suppose, however, that subsequently chap. v came to be added. This chapter is of varied contents. It consists of (1) *The Parable of the Divine Vineyard* (1-7), a story of a husbandman's labours crowned with disappointment. Its fences are therefore destroyed, and it is abandoned to ruin. The parable is applied to Judah, of which Jehovah is the Divine husbandman. To appreciate the details the reader is advised to consult Hastings' *DB.* 'Vine, Vineyard,' or, more concisely stated, the account given in *Hebrew Antiquities* (R.T.S.), pp. 95 foll. We have first after the introductory couplet,

'I would sing of my friend
My friend's song of his vineyard,'

---

[1] Zimmern in *KAT.*^{3} notes the Babylonian parallel of Nabû as the recording God who writes on tablets of destiny (pp. 400-407).

touching his vineyard. My wellbeloved had a vineyard
2 in a very fruitful hill: and he made a trench about it,
and gathered out the stones thereof, and planted it with
the choicest vine, and built a tower in the midst of it,
and also hewed out a winepress therein: and he looked
that it should bring forth grapes, and it brought forth wild
3 grapes. And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem and men
of Judah, judge, I pray you, betwixt me and my vineyard.

---

three eight-lined strophes or stanzas. The word for 'friend' in the original is a strong term of endearment.

1. wellbeloved is an appropriate rendering. There are two words for 'friend' in the Hebrew, and in the second line where 'friend' occurs it might mean 'love' rather than 'loved one.' In that case we must render by 'my love-song.' But it is more appropriate to render both Hebrew words by 'friend' or 'wellbeloved.' For in verses 3 foll. we notice that it is the 'friend' or Yahweh who speaks in His own person. The Hebrew word for 'friend' in the second line is *Dôd*, and this name, slightly varied, occurs in the inscription of the Stone of Mesha, line 12, 'altar of *Dôdah*,' the form being apparently feminine. We had occasion to notice (on i. 21) that Yahweh was regarded as the Husband of Israel as well as father of sons. Terms of relationship and endearment were frequently applied to deities by the Semitic peoples. Cf. the Hebrew *Ahijah* (meaning 'Yahweh is my brother'). *Dôd* in proper names meant 'uncle' (see Gray, *Hebrew Proper Names*, p. 11), and was probably commonly applied to Yahweh in the eighth century, but, like the name Baal ('lord' or 'husband'), came to be abandoned on account of its resemblance to the name of the god Hadad in its abbreviated form *Dâd*; cf. Hos. ii. 18, and Winckler in *KAT.*³, p. 225.

2. For **made a trench about it,** read 'dug about it.' As the vineyard was on a mountain-slope, it was full of stones, and these had to be cleared away before the vine-shoots were planted. These last were of a specially good quality called *Sōrek* ('choicest vine'). A watch-tower for some one to keep guard against depredators, whether man or beast, was built in the vineyard. Also a *yekebh* or 'wine-vat' (so render with R.V. marg.) was hewn out in the solid rock of the mountain-side. The wine-press was called *Pûrâh* or *Gath*, where men trod the grapes out (Isa. lxiii. 3; Joel iii. 18). By this process the grape-juice flowed through a grated opening into the 'vat' (or *yekebh*) in the earth below. The latter was superficially much smaller, but it was *deeper* (four feet square and three feet deep) than the wine-press.

What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I 4
have not done in it? wherefore, when I looked that it
should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes?
And now go to; I will tell you what I will do to my 5
vineyard: I will take away the hedge thereof, and it shall
be eaten up; I will break down the fence thereof, and it
shall be trodden down: and I will lay it waste; it shall 6
not be pruned nor hoed; but there shall come up briers
and thorns: I will also command the clouds that they
rain no rain upon it. For the vineyard of the LORD of 7
hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah his
pleasant plant: and he looked for judgement, but behold
oppression; for righteousness, but behold a cry.

Woe unto them that join house to house, that lay field 8

But all was of no avail. The grapes, after patient waiting, turned out to be bad and sour.

5. And now go to . . .: in the original, 'And now I would let you know,' &c. The thorn-hedge is to be removed, and it (i. e. the vineyard) shall be browsed upon at will. The rough stone wall (*gādēr*, called by the modern Arabs *jedar*) is to be broken down. The wild boar of the forest or any roving beast may work its will (Ps. lxxx. 12 foll., the idea of which may perhaps be an echo of this passage). Here a foreign (Assyrian) invasion is darkly presaged.

6. but there shall come up: we now pass to a slower and heavier measure.

7. The parable is applied. Judah is his 'delightsome plant.' Here again we have the assonance of words that was affected by ancient Hebrew as it is by modern oratory. Cf. Gen. ix. 6^a (Heb.). The word for 'judgment' is *mishpāṭ*, and for 'oppression' (properly 'bloodshed') is *mispāḥ*. The word for righteousness is *ṣedāḳāh*, and for 'cry' of distress is *tzeʿākāh*. We might, following the hint of Duhm's translation, render (though not literally):

'And I hoped for *good* rule, and behold! *blood*-rule,
And for law-*keeping*, and behold! law-*breaking*.'

(2) 8–24. *The Seven Woes.* We now come to a series of seven denunciations; such was originally the full number in this passage. Each strophe begins with a woe! (or Ah!) and is directed against some special corrupt phase or vice of society.

to field, till there be no room, and ye be made to dwell alone
9 in the midst of the land! In mine ears *saith* the LORD of
hosts, Of a truth many houses shall be desolate, even
10 great and fair, without inhabitant. For ten acres of
vineyard shall yield one bath, and a homer of seed shall
yield *but* an ephah.

In some cases we may assume that a considerable portion of the strophe has been lost. About 730 B.C. is not improbably the date of this poem.

The *first* strophe (8–10) is directed against the selfish greed for land and houses. Houses and fields of the dispossessed peasantry are bought up or seized by the rich and powerful. How this arose is probably to be explained in part by the harsh customs of usury which prevailed during the regal period, and which it was the purpose of legislation to restrain (Exod. xxii. 25 foll.; Deut. xxiii. 19 foll., xxiv. 10 foll., as well as the laws respecting seventh year and jubilee). The growth of trade and of large towns did not diminish the evil, and the ruthless wars of the ninth century with Syria, as well as the Syro-Ephraimite war of 735, had the inevitable result that it destroyed the fruits and crops and impoverished the small cultivator and reduced him with his family to utter destitution. His only resource was then to resort to borrowing at enormous interest (even perhaps 20 per cent., as we may infer from Babylonian contract tablets; see Hastings' *DB.* 'Usury'); or to relinquish his land and house to the eager creditor—who found the peasant's misfortune his golden opportunity—and to exchange his own freedom or that of his children for voluntary servitude. Cf. 2 Kings iv. 1; Hastings' *DB.* 'Servant' ('Slave'), p. 463.

9, 10. Probably two words have dropped out at the beginning of verse 9: '[Therefore hath sworn] in my ears Yahweh of hosts'; see on verse 19. In consequence the land becomes depopulated and large tracts go out of cultivation as the *latifundia* or great landed properties increase (just as in ancient Italy in the days of the Gracchi). **ten acres** of vineyard land yield only an ephah or bath of wine (between eight and nine gallons). Probably an 'acre' is not an adequate rendering of the Hebrew term, which is literally rendered 'yoke,' i. e. as much land as a pair (or 'yoke') of oxen can plough in a day—in reality considerably more than an acre. According to Ezek. xlv. 11 a **homer** is ten ephahs (or eighty-five gallons). We have the strange depressing fact that this quantity of seed yields instead of much more than, only one *tenth* of, its own measure! So impoverished and unproductive is the soil—a sure

Woe unto them that rise up early in the morning, that 11
they may follow strong drink; that tarry late into the
night, till wine inflame them! And the harp and the lute, 12
the tabret and the pipe, and wine, are *in* their feasts: but
they regard not the work of the LORD, neither have they
considered the operation of his hands. Therefore my 13
people are gone into captivity, for lack of knowledge:
and their honourable men are famished, and their multitude are parched with thirst. Therefore hell hath 14

---

sign of Divine judgment. For in O.T. prophecy nature sympathizes with the moral conditions of humanity and with Divine visitations (Gen. iii. 17; Isa. xxiv. 3–5; Hos. iv. 2, 3; Jer. xxiii. 10).

The *second* strophe (11–13) is a denunciation headed by Woe! (or Ah!) directed against the drunkenness and dissipation of the upper classes of society.

11, 12. Translate more idiomatically: 'rise up early in the morning, pursuing strong drink, . . . tarry late in the dusk, wine inflaming them.' On the appended imperfects in Hebrew as verbal circumstantial clauses see Gesen.-Kautzsch[26], § 156. 3. On the vice of drinking wine in the early morning see Eccles. x. 16 foll. The harp, lute, tambourine, and flute are the musical instruments that beguile the hours. Cf. an analogous passage in Amos vi. 1, 3–6 denouncing similar vices among the nobility of Samaria.

Omit the word 'in' (printed in italics) and read: 'are (i.e. constitute) their feasts.'

13. Translate: 'go into exile unawares' (Cheyne, Marti), blind to the evil which awaits them.

Translate: 'His honourable ones are exhausted with hunger.' The rendering 'exhausted' is due to a slight change of text; cf. Deut. xxxii. 24, where the phrase occurs. On the other hand, the LXX rendering 'dead with hunger' is based on the same Hebrew text as our Massoretic differently punctuated.

'And his throng parched with thirst.' The word for 'throng' in Hebrew means a tumultuous crowd.

14. *Third* strophe. We here seem to have a fragment only of the strophe, probably the conclusion, and it is consequently impossible to be sure as to its contents. It is not by any means clear that it specially referred to *Jerusalem*, as Duhm and Marti suppose, though the feminine possessive in 'her grandeur, her crowds, and her tumult' in verse 14, and the 'ruins' in verse 17, are certainly best explained by a reference to Jerusalem.

For **Hell** read Hades (in Heb. *Sheôl*), regarded in the time of

enlarged her desire, and opened her mouth without measure: and their glory, and their multitude, and their pomp, and he that rejoiceth among them, descend *into*
15 *it.* [**R ?**] And the mean man is bowed down, and the great man is humbled, and the eyes of the lofty are hum-
16 bled: but the LORD of hosts is exalted in judgement, and God the Holy One is sanctified in righteousness.
17 [**I**] Then shall the lambs feed as in their pasture, and the waste places of the fat ones shall wanderers eat.

18 Woe unto them that draw iniquity with cords of vanity,

Isaiah as the mysterious dark abode of the dead beneath the earth, where they led an obscure, joyless existence. From this dark region it was supposed that spirits might be summoned back to the earth by the arts of the necromancer (1 Sam. xxviii). On the Hebrew conceptions respecting Sheôl consult Charles' *Eschatology*, &c., pp. 33-37. Probably the Hebrew conceptions respecting Sheôl were more limited and vague than those of ancient Babylonia, represented in the legend of the descent of Ishtar to Hades. See note on xiv. 9 foll.

Verses **15** and **16** have all the appearance of an interpolation derived from the Isaianic utterance repeated in ii. 9, 11, 17. Perhaps they were inserted by the editor in the gap left in his defective copy.

Verse **17** presents a picture of pathetic and idyllic beauty: lambs quietly feeding on the grass-covered ruins where once there was pride, pomp, and uproar. The verse is evidently intended by the genius of the seer-poet to contain a contrast to the portrayal in the verse beginning with 'Ah!' that preceded verse 14, now lost. Note a similar contrast in iii. 24. The latter part of verse 17 is not certain as to text. For **wanderers** or 'strangers' (R. V. marg.) it would be better to render 'kids,' based on a slightly different reading of the Hebrew text. This has more probability, as the change of text is very slight and the parallelism with the **lambs** in the earlier part of the verse is thereby restored.

The *fourth* strophe (verses 18, 19 and verse 24 or a lost end) is directed against the *wilful doubters and triflers*. They scorn the denunciations of the prophet: '"Day of the Lord," you say. We do not believe in this pessimism. Let the day come. Nothing of what you say will ever happen.' These scorners are said by the prophet to drag the heavy load of their guilt and doom upon themselves by their perverse and obstinate refusal to accept the

and sin as it were with a cart rope: that say, Let him 19
make speed, let him hasten his work, that we may see it:
and let the counsel of the Holy One of Israel draw nigh
and come, that we may know it!

Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that 20
put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put
bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!

Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and 21
prudent in their own sight!

Woe unto them that are mighty to drink wine, and 22

---

message. They only aggravate their own penalty by thus tugging at the cords of false and vain confidence as they say 'Let the judgment come.'

19. It is best to take the verbs as intransitive: 'Let His work make speed and hasten.' This is not only more in accordance with Hebrew usage, but renders the parallelism of clauses more exact.

Holy One of Israel: cf. vi. 3 and note on holiness. We miss the verse with 'therefore' in this strophe, which recites the Divine judgment which will overtake this particular sin (cf. verses 13, 14: 'Therefore' probably stood originally at the beginning of verse 9—'Therefore hath sworn in my ears'. . .). It is quite possible, however, that verse 24 originally stood either at the end of the following strophe or at the end of *this* strophe, since the last two clauses of that verse seems to be specially directed against the 'mockers' in verses 18, 19. If this assumption is correct, we might suppose that, owing to the loss of the ending to the following strophes, the editor thought it best to place this verse at the close of the entire oracle, rather than leave the whole poem without a proper conclusion.

20. The *fifth* strophe (verse 20) is again defective, since it consists of only three complete lines instead of the usual six. If verse 24 be added, we get the requisite number of lines, but it does not form so appropriate a conclusion to the fifth as it does to the fourth strophe. This verse is directed against the sophists who play fast and loose with morality and use the arts of persuasion by calling things by their wrong names, exalting what is base by pandering to evil passions and low ideals, and depreciating what is good and just.

Translate: 'who set darkness as light and light as darkness,' &c.

21. *Sixth* strophe directed against blind self-conceit. Again we have several lines missing.

22. *Seventh* strophe directed against the heroic tippler, who

23 men of strength to mingle strong drink: which justify the wicked for a reward, and take away the righteousness of
24 the righteous from him! Therefore as the tongue of fire devoureth the stubble, and as the dry grass sinketh down in the flame, so their root shall be as rottenness, and their blossom shall go up as dust: because they have rejected the law of the LORD of hosts, and despised the word of the Holy One of Israel.

does not care for any mild beverage, but mixes the strong intoxicating drink for which Hebrew has a distinct name, *shēkār*. According to one authority it was a kind of brandy made of wine-grounds, dates, and honey[1]. This may be the spiced wine of Song of Songs viii. 2.

23. It is not easy to detect the logical connexion between drunkenness and corrupt tribunals. The former vice had been already denounced in the second strophe (verse 11). Translate: 'who acquit the wrong-doer for a bribe and deprive the just man of his right.' The LXX substitute a singular 'just man' for the plural of the Hebrew original 'just men,' and we are thereby saved from a grammatical confusion. The prophet may have intended to convey, through this combination of the two vices, that the crime of injustice becomes easy to a man whose mind is clouded by heavy drinking.

24. For **law** read 'instruction,' as in i. 9. The rapid decay of society from root to blossom is to be the inevitable result of its vices of levity and disbelief—swift as the devouring flame that consumes the stubble and the dry grass. Both Duhm and Marti are strangely hypercritical and see here incompatible figures. On the contrary, we find here vivid metaphors eminently characteristic and worthy of Isaiah. We have a partial parallel from the same hand in ix. 18, 19.

(3) 25–30. We come now to the third portion of the composite collection of oracles of which chap. v consists. We have already noted the defective condition of the second portion (2). We have now to deal with a mere fragment, the conclusion of a larger poem, torn from its connexion. Fortunately the earlier portion of this poem has been preserved to us in another small collection of Isaiah's prophecies, vi—xi. 9. We find it in ix. 7—x. 4. Here we

---

[1] *Zeitschrift des deutschen Palästinavereins* (1888), pp. 168 foll., cited by Marti.

Therefore is the anger of the LORD kindled against his 25
people, and he hath stretched forth his hand against
them, and hath smitten them, and the hills did tremble,
and their carcases were as refuse in the midst of the
streets. For all this his anger is not turned away, but
his hand is stretched out still. And he will lift up an 26
ensign to the nations from far, and will hiss for them
from the end of the earth: and, behold, they shall come
with speed swiftly: none shall be weary nor stumble 27
among them; none shall slumber nor sleep; neither
shall the girdle of their loins be loosed, nor the latchet of

have a poem consisting of four strophes, each of which closes with the same lines that form in this chapter the conclusion of verse 25:

'Despite all this His wrath has not turned back [1],
But still is His hand stretched out.'

This poem was directed not against Judah, but Ephraim; and its date is not improbably 726 B. C. (not 735, as most critics assume), for reasons which are indicated in the prefatory remarks to the poems ix. 7 foll. (cf. also Introduction, pp. 14 foll.).

25 must be a fragment of the fifth or some later strophe of the poem. It begins with the **Therefore** characteristic of Isaiah; but the form is somewhat varied in the original from that which recurs throughout the preceding oracle (verses 8-24), but is the same as that which meets us in the second strophe of this poem (viz. ix. 17). Carefully compare ix. 17 (16 Heb.) and the conclusion becomes inevitable that the present verse, like that, is the end of the strophe. Its preceding verses have been lost.

26. God summons a foreign nation to execute His vengeance on Ephraim for past iniquities and refusal to learn from bitter experience. The foreign foe is evidently Assyria (see Introduction). For **nations** read singular 'nation.' The Hebrew word is *gôi*, meaning always *foreign* nation.

27. The girdle (*ēzôr*) was not a mere waistband, which would be inadequate to military exigencies, but, as the Assyrian monuments show, was probably a 'cord or leather belt as now worn by eastern monks' (Dr. Mackie's article 'Dress' in Hastings' *DB.*). The *shoes*, as the monuments portray them, consisted of a stout sole made of leather or wood, the back protected by leather, and

---

[1] On the phrase 'turned back' (= ceased, abated) see note on chap. ix. 12.

28 their shoes be broken: whose arrows are sharp, and all their bows bent; their horses' hoofs shall be counted like
29 flint, and their wheels like a whirlwind: their roaring shall be like a lion, they shall roar like young lions: yea, they shall roar, and lay hold of the prey, and carry it away safe,
30 and there shall be none to deliver. And they shall roar against them in that day like the roaring of the sea: and if one look unto the land, behold darkness *and* distress, and the light is darkened in the clouds thereof.

6 [I] In the year that king Uzziah died I saw the Lord

---

the whole bound over the foot by thongs or straps (see 'Shoe' in *Enc. Bibl.*).

28. For **sharp** read 'sharpened,' and continue: 'and all bows bent,' as the relative construction is kept up. The bows are bent and arrows sharpened ready for immediate use. Every warrior is alert and advancing rapidly to action. The wheels are the large heavy wheels of the Assyrian chariot thundering on its way and raising clouds of dust like a storm.

29. The tumult of the advancing hosts and the roar of the chariots seem to the vivid imagination of the seer like the sound of a savage beast moaning or roaring for its hapless victim.

30. The simile changes to an image more awful: a roaring sea and thick darkness brooding over the land. 'And when one looks to the land, behold! agonizing darkness, and light is darkened in its gloom.' There is much doubt as to the last word rendered 'gloom.' The LXX render: 'And they shall look unto the land and behold oppressive darkness in their distress.' This presupposes some other shorter text than that which stands in the Hebrew.

CHAPTERS VI–IX. 7 (6 HEB.) BOOK OF IMMANUEL.

We are now entering upon a new series of documents of a more biographical character, and in which a certain chronological order is apparent. Oracles, however, are included in this small collection, and it is concluded, like the series chaps. ii–iv, by a Messianic prophecy. In chap. vii, in connexion with the events of the Syro-Ephraimite war, we are introduced to the prophetic conceptions personified in the name *Immanuel*. We find the Messianic ideal set forth yet more luminously in the concluding oracle which may have been uttered at the close of the prophet's life (cf. ii. 2–4 and notes). We therefore call this collection (vi–ix. 7) the *Book of Immanuel*. *Chap. vi* describes the commencement of sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train

---

the prophet's ministry. The work of the Hebrew prophet was not infrequently inaugurated by a consecration-vision—a theophany in which the prophet is summoned to his life-work. Moses (Exod. iii), Samuel (1 Sam. iii), and Ezekiel (Ezek. i, ii) were each called to his prophetic function by a remarkable and vivid manifestation of God's presence. But to other prophets God fulfils Himself in other and more normal ways. And it is through these normal ways 'the word of the Lord came' unto Hosea (through the domestic tragedy of his life), Amos, Micah, Jeremiah, and other prophets. It is one of the most mischievous delusions of religious life to unduly exalt the abnormal[1].

We have no criterion by which to decide whether this chapter and the next were composed by the prophet himself (Kuenen), or as Cheyne suggests (*Enc. Bibl.*), by a disciple of Isaiah. The date of composition cannot be ascertained. Kuenen is probably right in assuming that chap. vi was written some time, but probably not long, after the event, at a period when the real nature of his life-task was fully realized by the prophet, and the superhuman difficulties which lay before him. These darker aspects are so strongly emphasized in the chapter that we can best explain its general tone from the standpoint of mature age rather than early youth. Cheyne (ibid.) refers the composition to the year 734, which is not an improbable date.

The position of the chapter in the entire Isaianic collection is very unusual. In the collection bearing the name of Jeremiah and in the book of Ezekiel's prophecies the call of the prophet naturally comes first. Here the final redaction has departed from this tradition.

1. This opening verse, as well as Amos i. 1; Isa. xiv. 28, xx. 1; Jer. xlvii. 1, bears the impress of pre-exilian authorship. Winckler (*Alttestam. Untersuch.* p. 89) shows that these passages reveal the pre-exilian tradition of the Hebrews, who dated from

---

[1] The *normal* mode by which Christian ministers and statesmen have been led to realize their vocation constitutes the most interesting point in their life-story, because it is the *turning*-point. Among Christian statesmen we would instance the Englishman John Bright and the American Senator Sumner. The case of John Bright is not without its partial parallel to that of Hosea. That of Senator Sumner has been portrayed in Whittier's immortal verses beginning:

> No trumpet sounded in his ear,
>   He saw not Sinai's cloud and flame;
> But never yet to Hebrew seer
>   A clearer voice of Duty came.

2 filled the temple. Above him stood the seraphim: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and

---

special *events*, as the Babylonians did before 2000 B.C. After 1500 B.C. the latter dated from the years of the *king's* reign; and during, as well as after, the Exile the Hebrews followed the same practice.

The date of Uzziah's death cannot be definitely fixed, and we may now place it as far back as 740 B.C. or even earlier, since Winckler has shown the improbability of the identification of Uzziah (or Azariah) with the Azri-a-u of Tiglath-Pileser's inscriptions (see art. 'Uzziah' in Hastings' *DB.*).

The scene is laid in the outer court of the temple[1]. Yahweh's throne towers up into the heaven. What seems like the train of His Divine robe fills the temple. It is fairly obvious that the temple here referred to is not God's celestial palace-abode (*hêchāl*) to which Ps. xviii. 6 (7 Heb.) alludes, but the temple of Solomon familiar to the prophet.

2. 'Seraphs were standing above Him.' The Hebrew imperfects are best rendered by 'was covering,' 'was flying.' There has been considerable discussion as to the character and form of these winged Seraphim. This is the first mention of the Seraph as a supernatural attendant on Yahweh that meets us in the O. T., and there is no mention again of Seraphim in either O. T. or N. T., though the song of the four beasts in Rev. iv. 8 is certainly a reminiscence taken from the third verse of this chapter. The facts which must lie at the basis of any theory should be (1) The use of the word *sārāph* in Num. xxi. 6 as an epithet ('burning') of the destructive fiery serpents of the wilderness; (2) In two genuine passages of Isaiah (xiv. 29[2], xxx. 6) we have express mention of a flying dragon (or Sārāph). On these grounds we may infer that we have here a serpentine figure of a burning or fiery appearance or perhaps with glowing eyes, and from the passage before us we learn that it had six wings.

Two illustrative comparisons have been cited for us—(1) The Assyriologists Fried. Delitzsch and Fritz Hommel quote the Babylonian name for the solar fire-god Nergal, *sharrāpu*, but this parallel gives us no real guidance; moreover, there is insufficient evidence that Babylonia at this time (740 B. C. or earlier) exercised any special influence in Judah. In the days of Ahaz it may have been otherwise. (2) More attractive is the parallel originally

---

[1] Not the inner sanctuary (*debhîr*) as Cheyne concludes ('Seraphim,' *Enc. Bibl.*). The reference to the 'threshold' (verse 4) seems to forbid this.

[2] The genuineness is disputed in this case; see the notes.

with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly.
And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is 3

---

suggested by H. G. Tomkins, who compares the Egyptian *Seref*, which was a winged griffin and guarded the graves or sacred lonely trees. This cult, according to Pietschmann, *Phönizier*, pp. 175 foll., belonged to Syria as well as Egypt, and it seems to have some points of contact with the Seraph. Like the Cherûbîm which guarded the entrance to Paradise, Gen. iii. 24 (Yahwistic and pre-exilian), and also the ark in the holy place, so the Seraphim guarded the thresholds of the temple (verse 3), which were held to be especially liable to demonic influence (1 Sam. v. 5 : hence the bells on priests' clothing, Exod. xxviii. 33–35 ; and cf. 'Sorcery' in Hastings' *DB.* p. 603, left-hand column. Note also the winged lions of Assyrian temples and palaces, and the blood-smeared door-posts, Exod. xii. 22 foll.). But the figured illustration of a winged 'four-footed' animal in Pietschmann's work, p. 177, does not increase the probability of this comparison of the Egyptian *Seref*. The reference to the threshold in verse 3 is only incidental, and the conception of the Sārāph as a guardian power against demons, though probable, requires further evidence. For further information see 'Seraphim' in Hastings' *DB.*

2. The **feet** mean the lower parts of the body (a euphuism).

3. The application to God of the word **holy** requires some explanation, as the original significance of the word was not ethical, and therefore by no means synonymous with 'righteous.' The fundamental idea has generally been considered to be that of separation, i. e. from ordinary human contact or use. But Kittel holds it to be hardly probable that so negative a conception was the primitive and fundamental one, and that *devotion* to the Deity and His use was the *positive* conception originally expressed by the term. About this it is difficult to decide. It seems clear, however, that the idea of *taboo* attaching to objects and persons was very similar to that which originally belonged to the Hebrew *Ķōdesh* (holiness) and its collaterals. But the idea of devotion to and close connexion with Deity became undoubtedly the fundamental conception of the word combined with that of restriction as to employment or behaviour. But the devotion of an object or person to God means conformity of that object or person to the nature of God Himself. Consequently, as we find in Hebrew history, reflected in its literature, an evolution in the conception of the character and requirements of Yahweh, so a progress is clearly apparent in the meaning attached to the words 'holy' and 'holiness.' At first in the history of religion the term was merely ceremonial and not ethical. Even the priest or priestess of a degraded and licentious cult was called 'holy' because devoted to

the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory.
4 And the foundations of the thresholds were moved at the
voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with
5 smoke. Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone;
because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the
midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have
6 seen the King, the LORD of hosts. Then flew one of the

---

the service of the Deity. But as the conception of Yahweh became ethicized the term *holy* became ethicized also. This is especially true of Amos and Isaiah, who emphasized God's nature as righteous. The term 'holy' as a designation of God seems characteristic of Phoenicia as well as Israel, for we find in Eshmunazar's inscription, line 9, the expression 'holy gods.' As employed by Isaiah, the word connotes the *exalted and supreme divinity* of Yahweh, with special stress on His character as perfectly righteous whose presence could not be approached by sinful men. In Ezekiel (chaps. xl foll.) and Leviticus (xvii–xxvi) stress is laid on ritual purity and cleanness, a conception which becomes prominent in the post-exilian legislation of the Priester-codex. But *here* it is Yahweh's *ethical* attributes, combined with those of exaltation and unapproachableness, that are expressed by the word. The literature on this subject is considerable. The most important works are Baudissin's *Studien zur semitischen Religionsgeschichte*, Heft II (prefaced by a useful list of literature); Robertson Smith's *Religion of the Semites* ², pp. 140–164; Dr. Skinner's article 'Holiness' (in the O. T.) in Hastings' *DB.*; and Kittel's article 'Heiligkeit Gottes im A. T.' contributed to the last edition (3rd) of the *Realencyclopädie* (*PRE.*³).

The thrice repeated **Holy** expresses emphasis, as in Jer. xxii. 29. Hebrew presents many examples of repetition to express emphasis. To refer the threefold repetition to the doctrine of the Trinity (as the old expositors did, including even the late Franz Delitzsch) is an evident anachronism both here and in Rev. iv. 8.

'Filling (*lit.* fullness of) the earth is His *glory*.' The glory is the *external* manifestation of the Divine nature as opposed to *holiness*, which expresses the *internal* character (so Kittel, ibid.).

4. Render: 'And the foundations . . . *rocked*.' The smoke fills the temple, and is seen by the prophet issuing from the portico as he lies prostrated in worship in the outer court. Smoke is usually associated with Divine wrath, Ps. xviii. 8, lxxiv. 1, lxxx. 5 (Heb.); Rev. xv. 8. The wrath is obviously directed against the prevailing human iniquity; cf. verses 5, 9 foll.

5. Cf. note on i. 12. Not only is the prophet oppressed by his

seraphim unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which
he had taken with the tongs from off the altar: and he 7
touched my mouth with it, and said, Lo, this hath
touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy
sin purged. And I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, 8
Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then I said,
Here am I; send me. And he said, Go, and tell this people, 9
Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed,
but perceive not. Make the heart of this people fat, and 10
make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see

---

own sins, but by the tainted moral atmosphere in the midst of which he dwells.

6, 7. Read with R. V. (marg.) 'hot stone,' like the glowing stones with which bread was baked (1 Kings xix. 6). The touching of the lips or organs of human speech seems to be in anticipation of the future prophetic calling. Fire cleanses, and is one of the means of counter-working evil resorted to by magic (Morris Jastrow, *Religion of Babylonia*, pp. 276 foll.).

For **purged** read 'covered' or 'atoned-for.'

8. for us. Yahweh in His conversation with the Seraphim includes them in the counsels which the prophet is to obey. Christ raises the angels to a like honour in Luke xv. 7, 10. They co-operate in the work of creation, Gen. i. 26; Job xxxviii. 7.

The reply of the young prophet with its bold alacrity is in striking contrast to the utter prostration depicted in verse 5. The sense of relief brought by the experience of lips touched with the burning stone, of sin forgiven, and the fetters of the past broken, has worked wonders. His heart leaps in response to the call.

9. But when the terms of the Divine command were announced his heart must again have sunk within him! The original conveys a stronger meaning, in accordance with the Hebrew idiom of the absolute infinitive when placed *after* the verb (Gesenius-Kautzsch^{26}, § 113. 3, 6), than A.V. or R.V. gives in the English rendering. Therefore translate—

> Go on hearing, yet understand not;
> Go on seeing, yet perceive not.

This was to be the prophet's bitter experience shaped in the form of the scathing *εἰρωνεία* of command (cf. i. 18 and notes). Prophets not infrequently spoke in this strain, 1 Kings xviii. 27.

10 continues in the same vein of burning satire. Translate with Cheyne—'Make dull (*lit.* **heavy**) their ears and besmear their

with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand
11 with their heart, and turn again, and be healed. Then
said I, Lord, how long? And he answered, Until cities
be waste without inhabitant, and houses without man, and
12 the land become utterly waste, and the LORD have removed men far away, and the forsaken places be many in
13 the midst of the land. And if there be yet a tenth in it, it
shall again be eaten up: as a terebinth, and as an oak,
whose stock remaineth, when they are felled; so the holy
seed is the stock thereof.

---

eyes,' and in place of the R.V. read with the margin, 'and their heart should understand.' The final clause should then be: 'and they be healed again.' This is more in accordance with Hebrew idiom, but the translation of the R.V. **and turn again, and be healed** is also possible, and has the support of other passages in Isaiah; e.g. the name of his son Sheār-yāshûbh, vii. 3, ix. 1 foll.; cf. x. 21 foll. This rendering has, moreover, the support of LXX and Matt. xiii. 15, Acts xxviii. 27—all of which read *καὶ ἰάσομαι αὐτούς*, 'and *I* shall heal them.' In the N.T. use of the passage **turn again,** &c., 'return' means 'be converted.'

11. The young prophet asks in despair how long this fruitless ministry is to continue. The answer comes with a sentence of doom to Israel. It would be best to follow Cheyne, Duhm and Marti in adopting the slight variation of Hebrew text presupposed in the LXX, *καταλειφθήσεται*, 'and the land *be left* a desolation.'

12. 'And the deserted tracts spread far and wide amid the land.' Follow the R.V. (marg.) and read 'burnt' for 'eaten up.'

13. the holy seed is the stock thereof is an explanatory gloss. It does not find a place in the copy of the LXX, and was evidently a very late interpolation intended to comfort the reader. Yet it hardly can be said to harmonize with the preceding clause, which apparently means that even the stock or tenth part of the tree which remains will in its turn suffer destruction. The consecration-vision and the words of the Divine commission close in unrelieved gloom. Similarly the roll given to Ezekiel at his inauguration to the prophetic office is written before and behind 'with lamentation, mourning, and woe' (Ezek. ii. 10). But here the resemblance between the consecration-vision of Isaiah and that of Ezekiel may be said to cease. In the one case we have stately and severe simplicity, and in the other elaborate and complex effects. There is far more impressive sublimity and power in Isa. vi than in Ezek. i.

[**R I**] And it came to pass in the days of Ahaz the son of 7
Jotham, the son of Uzziah, king of Judah, that Rezin the
king of Syria, and Pekah the son of Remaliah, king of
Israel, went up to Jerusalem to war against it; but could
not prevail against it. And it was told the house of 2
David, saying, Syria is confederate with Ephraim. And
his heart was moved, and the heart of his people, as the
trees of the forest are moved with the wind.

CHAPTER VII.

1-16. *Judah invaded by the forces of Rezin and Peḳah. Interview between Aḥaz and Isaiah. The Sign of Immanuel.*

Chaps. vi, vii follow each other in the chronological order of the events described. We now move on several years in the prophet's life since the consecration-vision of the previous chapter. Probably as much as six (or more probably five) years may have elapsed. The date of the events described in chap. vii may be placed in 735-4 B.C. On the Syro-Ephraimite war see Introduction.

1 is usually held to be a redactorial preface based on 2 Kings xvi. 5. For **prevail** read 'fight.' Before the actual attack on Jerusalem could take place the enemies were obliged to withdraw their forces. The reason is not assigned. Probably the allied kings obtained news of the combination between Assyria and Judah, and that help was promised by the former to Aḥaz in his difficulties. In this verse we have only a brief summary for the information of the reader.

2 does not follow in any chronological sequence upon verse 1. The news is brought of the threatening movement of the allied kings against Jerusalem. For **is confederate with Ephraim** read 'is encamped on Ephraimite territory.' By the **house of David** would be meant the royal court, which doubtless included a large number of the descendants of Uzziah as well as Jotham, since every eastern monarch had his harem and numerous progeny; cf. 2 Kings x. 1 foll.: 'And his heart and that of his people shook as shake the forest trees before the wind.' They were in terror of ruthless extinction such as Jehu inflicted on the house of Omri. We know from verse 6 that it was the intention of the allied kings to place the 'son of Tabeël' on the throne of Judah. This may have been Rezin himself. In any case the extinction of the Davidic house would have been the inevitable consequence.

3 [I] Then said the LORD unto Isaiah, Go forth now to meet Ahaz, thou, and Shear-jashub thy son, at the end of the conduit of the upper pool, in the high way of the fuller's

---

3. The name *Sheār-Yāshûbh* means 'Remnant shall return' or 'be converted.' Most commentators assign to the Hebrew verb here the latter or ethical meaning, otherwise the name can only be interpreted to mean that a remnant shall return from exile after the inhabitants have been carried away into captivity. Such a conception of the exile of the southern inhabitants and their subsequent return can hardly have held a place in the prophetic conceptions of 735 B.C., before Judah had even been threatened by the Assyrian invader, and the northern or Ephraimite kingdom had suffered but little. The word 'return' in this proper name must therefore be interpreted in a religious sense as 'return to Yahweh,' 'be converted'; cf. Hos. xiv. 2. Isaiah gave significant and prophetic names to his children, just as Hosea did in the northern kingdom (Hos. i). It is not easy to determine the locality of the **conduit of the upper pool** or of the **fuller's field**. Cheyne waits for further exploration before pronouncing an opinion, while Marti, with more confidence, thinks it probable that the 'upper pool' is to be found in the pool disclosed by Guthe's excavations, lying north-east of the present pool of Siloam and south of the Tyropoeon valley. From this pool a canal or conduit passes outside the city to the present gardens of Silwân, and therefore, as we might assume, towards the old 'fuller's (or washer's) field.' The reader should consult the maps in Bädeker's *Palestine and Syria* of ancient Jerusalem, and also that of its environs, as well as the two maps in *Enc. Bibl.* under 'Jerusalem.' See also Stade's *Gesch. Isr.* pp. 591 foll. and *Zeitsch. des deutschen Palästinavereins*, 1882, pp. 271 foll.). In war the end of the conduit would certainly be stopped up, and the waters from the 'upper pool' would be collected in a lower one which lay inside the walls, so that the city might be provided with a full water-supply. Those who support this view of Stade and Guthe rely on xxii. 9 foll., which indicate that the upper pool lay on the south side, since the lower one lay there. But this inference Dillmann in his commentary (followed apparently by the subsequent editor Kittel) regards as not logical. The upper pool may have had a different locality, and it does not follow that Rabshaḳeh, when he came from Lachish (lying south-west), took up a position south of the city. According to xxxvi. 2 Rabshaḳeh with his army halted by the conduit of the upper pool, near the 'highway of the fuller's field.' This was the spot where he met Ḥezeḳiah's emissaries. From Josephus, *Wars of the Jews*, v. 7. 3, we learn that in the Roman period it was believed that the Assyrian camp lay north of the city, and that a

field; and say unto him, Take heed, and be quiet; fear 4
not, neither let thine heart be faint, because of these two
tails of smoking firebrands, for the fierce anger of Rezin
and Syria, and of the son of Remaliah. Because Syria 5
hath counselled evil against thee, Ephraim *also*, and the
son of Remaliah, saying, Let us go up against Judah, and 6
vex it, and let us make a breach therein for us, and set up
a king in the midst of it, even the son of Tabeel: thus 7

'fuller's monument' was to be seen there (v. 4. 2). In addition to this it has been argued that the armies of Rezin and Peḳaḥ would be likely to advance against the city on the north rather than the south side. Accordingly the older commentators, Ewald, Hitzig, and others, held that the 'upper pool' and the 'fuller's field' should be assigned to that region, and this view has been confirmed by recent investigations, which have revealed the existence of a conduit which entered the city east of the present Damascus gate, and taking a southerly course passed into a long (now subterranean) double pool just in front of the old tower of Antonia, and probably penetrated even further, into the temple precincts. It has been argued that this conduit must have existed in ancient times. The evidence, however, cannot be said to be conclusive, nor does the testimony of Josephus more than seven centuries after the event carry with it much weight. The balance of proof inclines rather to the position maintained by Stade, Guthe, and Marti. At present Cheyne's reserve of judgment seems justified.

4. 'and let not thy heart be dismayed (or faint), because of these two ends (Cheyne: 'fag-ends') of smoking logs, in the blazing wrath of Rezin and Aram, and Remaliah's son.' The last expression is one of contempt. Remaliah was an obscure personage.

6. By a slight change of the Hebrew text we obtain a more satisfactory sense. The LXX rendering shows that the text here is uncertain. Translate: 'We will beleaguer it, and make a breach into it.'

son of Tabeel. This parallel expression to 'son of Remaliah,' which was a contemptuous way of designating Peḳaḥ as a person of obscure origin, suggests that Rezin is similarly designated. Winckler argues that Tabēl reigned in Damascus circ. 773-740 (?) B. C. It is not improbable that his Syrian name was Ṭâb-Rammân, since Rammân (Rimmôn) was a Syrian deity (cf. 2 Kings v. 18). He might be also called Ṭâbēl, since we know that *ēl* (the ordinary word for 'god') might be substituted for the proper name of

saith the Lord God, It shall not stand, neither shall it
8 come to pass. For the head of Syria is Damascus, and
the head of Damascus is Rezin : [R] and within threescore
and five years shall Ephraim be broken in pieces,
9 that it be not a people : [I] and the head of Ephraim is
Samaria, and the head of Samaria is Remaliah's son. If
ye will not believe, surely ye shall not be established.
0, 11 And the Lord spake again unto Ahaz, saying, Ask thee

---

a deity in personal names. Thus in Sargon's inscriptions the same king is called now Jahu-bi'di, and at another time Ilu-bi'di, where *Yahu* corresponds to the Hebrew Yahweh, and *Ilu* to the Hebrew Êl. See Winckler, *A. T.-liche Untersuch.* pp. 60–76 (a chronological scheme of the kings of Damascus is given on p. 76).

8. The latter part of this verse, with its exact numerical details, is very unlike the style of Isaiah, and has therefore been regarded by many critics as a subsequent addition. It is difficult to see its purpose or meaning. It obviously interrupts the continuity of verses 8 and 9. Its purpose is obscure, since relief from the presence of the northern kingdom at a time which lies outside the duration of the life of Ahaz would hardly serve to encourage the king's heart. Its meaning is somewhat obscure. The final overthrow of Ephraim took place in 722–1, when the city was captured and its inhabitants deported to the Euphrates. The date of this prophecy can be definitely fixed as 735. The sixty-five years bring us to 669 B. C., the reign of Esarhaddon. This Assyrian monarch reigned from 681–668 B. C., and, as we learn from Ezra iv. 2–10, settled colonists from the Euphrates in Samaria. This statement receives some support from the cuneiform records of Esarhaddon. See Schrader, *COT.*, ii. p. 61 foll. The settlement of this foreign population in the lands once occupied by the proud race of Ephraim might well be regarded by the inhabitants of Judaea as the final extinction of the nationality of their northern neighbours.

'If ye believe not, surely ye abide not secure.' Duhm (cf. Stade, *Gesch. Israels*, p. 594, footnote 2) remarks on this perhaps the earliest passage that lays stress on *faith*, unless it be Gen. xii. 1 foll., xv. 6. Here the direct object of faith is the word of the prophet, but that word is also the word of the Lord, as the declaration (verse 7) of the prophet himself distinctly asserts. The only path of safety is that which his contemporary Hosea was a few years later pointing out to his Ephraimite countrymen (cf. Hos. xiv. 2–4), viz. loyalty to Yahweh and independence of foreign alliances.

10–17. The preceding utterances of the prophet seem to have

a sign of the LORD thy God; ask it either in the depth,
or in the height above. But Ahaz said, I will not ask, 12
neither will I tempt the LORD. And he said, Hear ye 13
now, O house of David; is it a small thing for you to
weary men, that ye will weary my God also? Therefore 14
the Lord himself shall give you a sign; behold, a virgin

---

failed of their purpose to rouse the fainting courage of Aḥaz as he heard the news of the junction of the allied armies at a short distance across the northern frontier. Apparently he does not sympathize in the feeling of contempt for the two royal leaders expressed by the prophet (verses 4-9), and exhibits no indication of trust in Yahweh for deliverance.

11. Accordingly the prophet renews his appeal to the king: 'Ask for thyself a sign from Yahweh, thy God, down in the depth to Sheôl (Hades), or high in the height above.' The reading Sheôl is undoubtedly right, and it is supported by the versions Aq., Sym., Vulg. and most modern commentators. The other reading, which is that of A. V. and R. V., is based on another punctuation of the Hebrew characters of the word Sheôl which makes it an imperative **ask**, and has the support of the Peshiṭta (Syriac) version and of the Targ. It is probably due, at least in part, to the endeavour to avoid the suggestion of necromancy. It is indeed possible that the summoning of 'spirits from the vasty deep' was one of the signs which Aḥaz now had it in his power to claim. Such a view, however, seems to run counter to Isaiah's own exhortation to his degenerate countrymen in the following chapter (viii. 19 foll.). The wide contrast of Sheôl beneath and the height above is intended to express the wide range of choice permitted to the unbelieving king in the sign for which he is to ask. Ewald appositely compares Ḳorân, Sur. vi. 35.

12. The cold and disdainful apathy of the king, who declines to be thus caught in the toils of argument with the prophet, is expressed in the answer, 'I will not put Yahweh to the test.'

13. The wrathful impatience of the prophet breaks forth in the words: 'Is it too slight a thing for you to weary men, that you weary even my God?'

14. God will *Himself* (note the pronoun in Heb.) give you a sign, though unsolicited by you. The sign is to establish the faith of the king in the prophet's word, that the power of the allied kings is really of no account and is destined to disappear.

The latter part of this verse has been the subject of much discussion, and great diversity of opinion has been held as to the denotation of the term *virgin* here and of the son *Immanuel.*

shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name

With regard to the *connotation* of the Hebrew word for **virgin** scholars are agreed. That word is *'almah*, and does not mean simply 'maid' or unmarried woman, which is expressed in Hebrew by a different word (viz. *bethûlah*), but it means, as Robertson Smith has pointed out (*Prophets of Israel*, p. 272), no more than 'a young woman of age to be a mother[1],' whether she be married or not. We have a clear instance of this in Prov. xxx. 19. But to this substantive an *article* is prefixed, and there has been a considerable difference of opinion as to the significance to be attached to it. Usually the definite article has in Hebrew, as in other languages, an individualizing force. But it may have here, as some scholars suppose, an indeterminate force, rendered in R.V. by 'a virgin.' In Hebrew we have not infrequently examples of this use of the article to designate a person or thing which is for the present unknown. Here it would mean: Some virgin through whom the sign announced will be realized (Gesenius-Kautzsch's *Heb. Gram.*^{26} § 126. 4*r*[2]).

Accordingly, various theories have been advanced as to the signification of the reference to the 'young woman' and the 'son' in this passage. Following Dillmann, we may enumerate them as follows :—

(1) Ecclesiastical tradition, based on Matt. i. 22 foll., has interpreted the word as 'virgin,' and has referred it to the Virgin Mary and the birth of Christ. This was supported by the older expositors, including Hengstenberg and our own Henderson (whose exegesis and etymology are alike extraordinary). It is quite obvious that Isaiah could not possibly have intended to convince Aḥaz and his unbelieving retinue ('house of David') by a sign which would not take place till more than seven centuries had elapsed.

(2) The word *'almah* was held by some of the older Jewish expositors to denote one of the women in the harem of Aḥaz (so Kimḥi and Abarbanel), others have held that the mother of Ḥezeḳiah was meant. But unless we are to reject altogether the numerical details of 2 Kings xvi. 2, xviii. 2, we must hold with Jerome that chronological considerations are against this latter view, since Ḥezeḳiah would then have been born in 734 B. C., and

---

[1] Cf. Duhm, *Theologie der Propheten*, footnote, pp. 164 foll. Other examples of the use of *'almah* may be found in Gen. xxiv. 13, 16; Song of Songs vi. 8.

[2] Cf. Moore's note on Judges vii. 13 (*hā-ôhĕl*), 'The definite article is idiomatically used in Hebrew when an object is made definite in the imagination of the speaker by what is done with or to it in the story.'

Immanuel. Butter and honey shall he eat, when he 15

---

yet at his accession (726, 719, and 715 B. C. are the various dates suggested) was twenty-five years old. It may here be remarked that, amid the uncertainty which besets the numerical statements of the Bible in the chronology of the regal period to the end of the eighth century, it is difficult to discuss this view satisfactorily.

(3) The word *'almah* has been held to be a well-understood personification of the House of David (Hoffmann, Köhler and Weir), or of the community in Zion (E. Meier and Orelli). This involves a personification which has numerous parallels. It is quite possible that in the days of Isaiah the word *'almah* was constantly employed to designate the Zion community, just as *bethûlah* is applied to Israel in Amos v. 2; Jer. xviii. 13, xxxi. 4, 21. The use of the definite article with particularizing force would thus be quite appropriate.

(4) Rashi and Aben Ezra among mediaeval Jewish expositors, and Hermann Schultz (*Alttestamentliche Theol.*^{5}, p. 618) among modern exegetes, hold that Isaiah's own wife is meant. But his wife was already mother of Sheār-yāshûbh, and could not therefore be *'almah*. Moreover, in viii. 3 the wife of the prophet is called 'prophetess.' It is gratuitous to suppose that yet another younger woman is meant, as Gesenius, Bunsen, and some of the older scholars imagined.

(5) A few commentators belonging to the first fifty years of the last century (e. g. Umbreit) held that by the term 'the young woman' the prophet was pointing to some pregnant young woman standing close at hand[1]. But this was an indelicate act hardly possible in the ancient oriental world.

(6) A considerable number of recent commentators (beginning with Michaelis, and including Roorda, Kuenen, &c.), following the grammatical explanation of the definite article set forth above, regard 'the young woman' as some undefined personage, since her personality has no importance ascribed to it. Immanuel is then interpreted to be the image or representative of the new era that was dawning. But in verse 15 we have something more than an ideal personage. It is a definite concrete reality in the prophet's mind, which in viii. 8 is specially addressed. These considerations appear to us fairly strong. On the other hand, Stade and Duhm follow Hitzig in regarding verse 15 as a later

---

[1] Cheyne cites Bevan, *Jewish Quarterly Review*, vi. (1894), pp. 220 foll., where an Arabian story is mentioned, told by Ibn Hisham, that a Jew of Medina uttered a prediction the *sign* of which consisted simply in the fact that a boy present in the company (the narrator of the story) will live to see the prediction fulfilled.

16 knoweth to refuse the evil, and choose the good. For

---

addition, and are thus able to surmount the objection (so also Marti).

(7) Lastly, Ewald and Orelli, followed by Briggs and Guthe, while regarding the *'almah* as the unknown mother of Immanuel, interpret the name Immanuel in a more distinctly Messianic sense, and connect it with the more definite Messianic predictions in Isa. ix. 1–6 and xi. 1 foll. These passages, on the other hand, Hackmann, Cheyne, and Marti consider to be not Isaianic in origin, but the productions of a later post-exilian (?) writer (like Mic. v. 2). We have already (in dealing with ii. 2–4) had occasion to refuse assent to these views so far as ix. 1–6 and xi. 1 foll. are concerned, which Duhm regards as the genuine productions of Isaiah. We are justified, therefore, in regarding the personality of Immanuel as representing the truth embodied in his name—the watchword 'God is with us.' The new Divine kingdom of righteousness and peace symbolized by the name and portrayed in the Isaianic oracles just mentioned would not be established till the troubles of the Assyrian invasions (v. 26 foll. and vii. 18 foll., viii. 7 foll.) had passed away, and the overthrow of Assyria had been accomplished (ix. 1–4).

After reviewing these varied opinions, our judgment inclines to accept the suggestion of Meier (3), that the enigmatic term 'the young woman' or 'the maiden' was at that time a current designation of the Jewish community in Jerusalem, out of which the ideal ruler with the name Immanuel was to be born, and that there would gather round his personality the group of Messianic ideas just indicated (7).

This Immanuel prophecy thus became the germ out of which a cycle of Messianic conceptions grew. We find them in Jer. xxiii. 5–8, xxx. 9, 21, xxxiii. 15–17; Ezek. xxxiv. 23–31, xxxvii. 24; and also in Zech. iii. 8–10. But in the days of Zechariah (as well as in those of Ezekiel) the person of a Davidic king was beginning to recede and give place to that of the High Priest, who in the later days of the Maccabees usurped a royal pre-eminence and authority. In the days of the Exile and in post-exilian times Messianic prophecy tended to lose the distinctive Isaianic feature of the ideal King until its revival in Ps. lxxii. This yearning for an ideal Divine ruler and redeemer finds its ultimate fulfilment in Jesus Christ, the focus and embodiment of all the highest anticipations of His race. It is in this sense Jesus came to 'fulfil,' not in mere casual, external and superficial forms of coincidence, but in essence, in spirit and in truth, 'all that the prophets have spoken.'

15. 'to reject the evil and to choose the good' is a phrase employed to mean 'able to discriminate,' 'capable of intelligence.'

before the child shall know to refuse the evil, and choose the good, the land whose two kings thou abhorrest shall be forsaken. The Lord shall bring upon thee, and upon 17
thy people, and upon thy father's house, days that have not come, from the day that Ephraim departed from Judah; [**R**] *even* the king of Assyria.

[**I**] And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord 18

Another expression is employed in chap. viii. 2. A parallel to the phrase employed here we find in Gen. ii. 9, 17, where 'knowledge of good and evil' is used to express not perception of moral distinctions, but *knowledge, intelligence in general*; cf. Deut. i. 39.

'Sour milk (or curds) and honey shall he eat.' Doughty, in *Arabia Deserta*, vol. i. p. 263, tells us that the wandering tribes in Arabia consider the milk of their camels and their flocks much more refreshing if it has been slightly fermented or soured by being poured into the milk-skin, on the inner side of which are still sticking sour clots from the previous milking and there shaken for a brief period. This kind of sour milk was called by the Hebrew *ḥem'ah.* See article 'Milk' in *Enc. Bibl.* The *honey* is also significant of a primitive condition of life and culture characteristic of nomads; cf. Deut. xxxii. 13; Ps. lxxxi. 16; 1 Sam. xiv. 25 foll.; Mark i. 6 (Matt. iii. 4). The young *Immanuel* lives on the plain fare of a nomad, betokening the desolations of war which have left the land bare of everything but the simple products of the desert.

16. shall be forsaken means here, 'shall be left desolate.' Cf. similarly chap. vi. 12, where the Hebrew *'azûbah*, rendered 'forsaking,' means 'tracts deserted,' or left desolate.

17. Ephraim departed from Judah: a reference to the national disaster of the separation of the 'ten tribes,' in the reign of Rehoboam. Most critics are agreed that the final words **king of Assyria** were added as a later explanatory gloss (so Lowth, Eichhorn, Gesenius, Hitzig, Kuenen, Duhm, and Cheyne). On the other hand, Ewald and Delitzsch regard the words as a genuine and effective conclusion to the verse.

Verses 18–25. A series of brief fragments of Isaiah's oracles are appended to the preceding utterance of the prophet. We notice the recurrence of the formula **in that day**, which we have already observed in ii. 20, iii. 18, iv. 2. Probably a considerable interval of time separated these oracles from the preceding—

shall hiss for the fly that is in the uttermost part of the rivers of Egypt, and for the bee that is in the land of
19 Assyria. And they shall come, and shall rest all of them in the desolate valleys, and in the holes of the rocks, and upon all thorns, and upon all pastures.

20 In that day shall the Lord shave with a razor that is hired, *which is* in the parts beyond the River, [**R**] *even* with the king of Assyria, [**I**] the head and the hair of the feet: and it shall also consume the beard.

perhaps as much as two years[1]. Meanwhile the prophet noted the signs of the times and the weakness of Judah's position.

18. Some have supposed that the 'fly at the end of Egypt's Nile streams' is a reference to the tsetse fly (so Marti). This points to the southern or Nubian region. On the swarm of flies in Egypt, cf. Exod. viii. 13–20; see also on Isa. xviii. 1. The term used here is quite indefinite. The writer in *Enc. Bibl.* (article 'Fly') suggests the seroot fly of Upper Egypt and Nubia—allied to our horse-fly, and about the size of a wasp: 'Its very powerful mouth-organs inflict a painful wound, in which other flies attempt to lay their eggs. It is a plague to man and beast in the rainy season.' The bee of Syria and Palestine is much more aggressive than that of England (cf. the language of Deut. i. 44 and Ps. cxviii. 12), and chiefly frequents rocks (Deut. xxxii. 13; Ps. lxxxi. 16). We have a similar metaphor of the bee in Homer, *Iliad*, ii. 87; and, just as here, in Aeschylus, *Persae*, 128 foll., of an advancing army.

19. 'And they shall enter and settle all of them in the defiles of the cliffs, and in the rock-clefts, and in all the thorn-bushes and all the pastures.'

20 may be another brief utterance. The 'razor hired on the other side of the river' (Euphrates) means obviously the Assyrians, whom Yahweh is supposed to hire to execute His chastisement on Israel or Judah; it is not quite certain which is to be the object. For **consume** (A. V. and R. V.) read 'remove.'

---

[1] Hardly, however, can these oracles be assigned, as Cheyne suggests, to the time when Ḥezeḳiah was negotiating with Tirhaḳah, as chronological considerations stand in the way. See Introduction. Tirhaḳah can scarcely belong to an earlier time than the opening of the seventh century. We might, however, place them in the days of Sargon (720 B. C. after the battle of Raphia, or 711 after the capture of Ashdod).

And it shall come to pass in that day, that a man shall 21
nourish a young cow, and two sheep; and it shall come 22
to pass, for the abundance of milk that they shall give he
shall eat butter: for butter and honey shall every one eat
that is left in the midst of the land.

And it shall come to pass in that day, that every place, 23
where there were a thousand vines at a thousand silver-
lings, shall even be for briers and thorns. With arrows 24
and with bow shall one come thither; because all the
land shall be briers and thorns. And all the hills that 25
were digged with the mattock, thou shalt not come thither
for fear of briers and thorns, but it shall be for the sending
forth of oxen, and for the treading of sheep.

And the LORD said unto me, Take thee a great tablet, 8

Verses 21–25 contain another fragment, but it does not appear to be wholly independent of verse 20, unless we follow Dillmann and attach it to verse 15. The invasion of Palestine by the Assyrians destroys agriculture and all the products of tillage. Man reverts to the condition of a nomad or a hunter. He maintains a heifer and two sheep, and lives on the sour milk, eking out his subsistence on that and the wild honey; see note on verse 15. Perhaps there is a tinge of irony in the reference to the **abundance.**

23. A vine worth a shekel ('silverling' or 2*s.* 9*d.*) would be of superior quality. The land which has been desolated by the Assyrian armies has gone out of cultivation. Instead of vineyards we have thorns and thistles.

24. Such spots can only serve for the huntsman with bow and arrows.

25. The mountains which had been hoed over for vine-culture (cf. chap. v. 2) become now an impenetrable thicket which no one cares to enter, and can only serve for cattle to feed in.

viii. 1–18, though consisting of several portions, evidently belong to nearly the same time, and this time immediately follows that of the prophetic address as well as incidents contained in chap. vii. 1–16. In the latter Isaiah was concerned with the unbelieving king and court. Here he addresses himself to the people.

1–4. A public sign set before the eyes of the people, that

and write upon it with the pen of a man, For Maher-
2 shalal-hash-baz; and I will take unto me faithful witnesses
to record, Uriah the priest, and Zechariah the son of
3 Jeberechiah. And I went unto the prophetess; and she
conceived, and bare a son. Then said the LORD unto

Samaria and Damascus are shortly to suffer overthrow from the king of Assyria.

1. It is uncertain what the **tablet** was made of. Another word is employed in the original of xxx. 8, Exod. xxiv. 12, &c. In the present case the Hebrew word means something smooth or polished, whether of metal, stone, or wood. The word rendered **pen** signifies a metal stylus. The 'stylus of an ordinary man' probably bears reference to the *writing* rather than the writing instrument. Accordingly the translation of R. V. margin is to be preferred: 'in common characters,' i. e. such as any passer-by can read. These characters were, of course, not the square Hebrew characters now employed, since these were not used till several centuries later, but the Phoenician characters found twenty-five years ago in the inscription at the bottom of the pool of Siloam, descriptive of the excavation of the conduit leading into the pool. It is probable that this inscription was cut in the rock during Isaiah's lifetime, and the Hebrew characters there used would therefore be those with which the name *Mahēr Shālāl Ḥāsh Baz* was written. This name is really a brief sentence, and signifies 'Speeds Booty Hastens Spoil' (the verbs are in reality participles). The preposition 'to' (translated 'for' in R. V. and 'concerning' in A. V.) prefixed to the name properly signifies *possession.* The same preposition is found on a large number of Hebrew seals (see Benzinger's *Hebräische Archäologie*, German ed., p. 258 foll.)

2. Following the LXX, we should make a slight modification of the Hebrew text and so restore the original reading and translate: 'and take as faithful witnesses for me. . . .' In Babylonian contract-tablets the names of the witnesses are appended on the reverse side of the tablet. Whether these names were recorded on this tablet we are not informed. It is somewhat remarkable that the priest Uriah, who was one of the witnesses, is expressly mentioned in 2 Kings xvi. 11 as conniving at the foreign religious innovations of Aḥaz, and building an altar according to his request.

3. The wife of Isaiah is here called **the prophetess.** The child is called by a significant name like Sheār-yāshûbh and Immanuel; cf. vii. 3, note. The significance of the name as bearing upon the overwhelming overthrow of the allied kings by the armies of the allied kings needs no comment.

me, Call his name Maher-shalal-hash-baz. For before the 4 child shall have knowledge to cry, My father, and, My mother, the riches of Damascus and the spoil of Samaria shall be carried away before the king of Assyria.

And the LORD spake unto me yet again, saying, Foras- 5, 6 much as this people hath refused the waters of Shiloah that go softly, and rejoice in Rezin and Remaliah's son;

---

4. shall be carried is not an exact translation of the Hebrew verb. The rendering should be: 'One shall carry away the riches,' &c. The king of Assyria here mentioned is, of course, Tiglath-Pileser III (745–727 B.C.). See Introduction. In vii. 1–17 there is no mention of the king of Assyria, unless we regard the last clause of verse 17 ('the king of Assyria') as genuine and not an added explanatory gloss. If we take the view of most critics and reject this clause, we must assume that the policy of Aḥaz in summoning the mighty power of Assyria to his aid had either not yet been developed or had not then been disclosed to the prophet. But in the brief interval which separated vii. 1–17 from viii. 1–4, the prophet must have become fully cognizant of the ties which bound Aḥaz to the Assyrian monarch, and that the latter would be moving his forces against Pekaḥ and Rezin.

6. The discovery of the tunnel leading to the pool of Siloam from the Virgin's Spring, and of the inscription to which reference has been made, throws a welcome light on this verse. The waters of Shiloaḥ (now Silwân) is the image employed by the prophet to represent the silent and beneficent power of Yahweh. The ancient Semites regarded springs as sacred (R. Smith, *RS.* ², pp. 166-84), and the connexion of this stream and spring with the eastern side of the temple-hill may have been significant. This beautiful image of the Shiloaḥ waters was probably the motive which suggested to the poet of Ps. xlvi the beautiful lines:—

'. . . a river, whose channels bring gladness to God's city,
The sanctuary of the dwellings of the most High.
God is in her midst; she will not shake:
God will help her at break of morn.'

Trust in this God, who works with might and stillness for the welfare and safety of Jerusalem, is opposed to the confidence felt by the court and by the people in the world-power Assyria, represented by the tumultuous waters of the Euphrates or Tigris, which will one day overwhelm Judah (verse 7).

The latter clause of this verse is hopelessly obscured by a wrong reading in the Hebrew text. **rejoice in Rezin** yields no sense,

7 now therefore, behold, the Lord bringeth up upon them
the waters of the River, strong and many, [R] *even* the
king of Assyria and all his glory: [I] and he shall come
8 up over all his channels, and go over all his banks: and
he shall sweep onward into Judah; he shall overflow and
pass through; he shall reach even to the neck; and
the stretching out of his wings shall fill the breadth of
thy land, O Immanuel.

for in vii. 2 we were told precisely the reverse. Accordingly we shall do well to adopt the emendation first suggested by Hitzig, and render 'and are faint-hearted at Rezin.' The actual change required by the emendation is comparatively slight.

Verses 7-8. A sudden transition from the gently flowing Shiloah-waters of God's own city Jerusalem to the roaring tumultuous flood of the Euphrates. Since the former was rejected by the Jewish people, the latter shall overwhelm them with God's judgment on the nation for their distrust of Him and His message.

8. Not only will the northern kingdom (Ephraim) be overwhelmed by the calamity, but also the southern kingdom (Judah) will one day share in the visitation. These prophecies of coming ill were severally fulfilled, for Ephraim in 734 and finally in 722 B. C.; for Judah in 701 (invasion of Sennacherib). See Introduction. This verse may be idiomatically rendered: 'and it shall pass over into Judah streaming and overflowing, reaching as far as the neck[1].'

At the close of the verse the metaphor suddenly changes from that of a river to that of a bird of prey with outstretched wings: 'and the spreading forth of its wings fill the breadth of thy land, Immanuel.' Here it is obvious that Immanuel is addressed as the living embodiment of Judah's trust in the Divine Presence in the midst of danger and uncertainty. There is no need to follow Cheyne and Marti in disconnecting this latter part of the verse from the preceding, and attaching it to verses 9, 10 as an added fragment or appendix. Rapid change of metaphor is characteristic of Isaiah's style; cf. v. 30. To refer the outspread wings to Yahweh (Cheyne) is very arbitrary. The prophet is thinking of an Assyrian *army* under this metaphor.

---

[1] On the loosely appended perfect and imperfect tenses in the Hebrew used in vivid descriptions, see Ewald, *Ausführliches Lehrbuch*^{8}, § 346^b.

Make an uproar, O ye peoples, and ye shall be broken 9
in pieces; and give ear, all ye of far countries: gird yourselves, and ye shall be broken in pieces; gird yourselves,
and ye shall be broken in pieces. Take counsel together, 10
and it shall be brought to nought; speak the word, and it
shall not stand: for God is with us. For the LORD spake 11

9, 10 follow in close connexion with the preceding. The peoples here addressed are the foreign peoples, including, however, Ephraim also. Whatever plans and plots they may devise against Judah will fail. Even the stream of invasion, to which verse 8 graphically referred, though reaching to the neck, does not drown. The prophet recites once more the name Immanuel like a talismanic charm:—

> 'Rage[1], ye peoples, and be dumbfounded;
> And hearken, all distant parts of the earth:
> Gird yourselves, and be dumbfounded;
> Gird yourselves, and be dumbfounded.
> Plan a plan that it may be destroyed;
> Declare your purpose that it may not stand:
> For with-us-God.'

Here we see the central idea of Isaianic prophecy. God would not suffer Judah to be utterly overwhelmed. After the final judgment and visitation of Divine chastisement was over, Jerusalem would be saved through the presence of a righteous or converted remnant (Sheār-yāshûbh). It was this message that saved king and people from despair and ruin in the desperate extremity of 701 B.C., when Sennacherib's armies menaced the city. We have no reason, however, to attribute the words above cited to that later period. They are to be connected with the events of 735-4 B.C. Here again the words of the prophet may have suggested those of the Psalm-writer in Ps. ii. 1 foll.:—

> 'Why have nations raged,
> And peoples meditate vanity . . .'

The sublime words of Isaiah—the messenger of faith and hope—struck a new note in prophecy destined to reverberate through all

---

[1] The LXX renders 'know' on the basis of a slightly different but mistaken text (due to the confusion of the character *Resh* (r) with *Daleth* (d) which constantly meets us in the O.T., and occasions *Aram* to be written in place of Edom).

thus to me with a strong hand, and instructed me that I
12 should not walk in the way of this people, saying, Say ye
not, A conspiracy, concerning all whereof this people shall
say, A conspiracy; neither fear ye their fear, nor be in
13 dread *thereof.* The LORD of hosts, him shall ye sanctify;

---

future time. Like Becket in Tennyson's drama, we can say, if we have reached faith's stronghold—

> 'Fear not I should stumble in the darkness,
> Not tho' it be their hour, the power of darkness,
> But my hour too, the power of light in darkness,
> I am not in the darkness, but the light.'

Verses 11–15 recount a special vision vouchsafed to the prophet, to which he refers in the unusual phrase 'as the hand held me fast, admonishing me not to walk in the way of this people.' The hand was Yahweh's hand, signifying His supernatural power. Similarly the prophets say 'The hand of the Lord was upon me' (Ezek. i. 3, iii. 14, &c.), when describing the state of ecstasy through which the supernatural message was conveyed. The normal expression is 'The word of the Lord was unto. . . .'

12–13. Call not everything conspiracy that this people calls conspiracy,
And the object of their fear, fear not nor dread.
Yahweh (God) of Hosts, regard Him as holy.
He is your object of fear, He your dread.
(Read, with Duhm, *ma'arāṣ*).

The Hebrew text here is not as certain as could be wished. The LXX render the word in question not by **conspiracy**, but by 'hard,' evidently reading *Ḳāsheh* 'hard' in their Hebrew copy, whereas in our text we have *Ḳesher*, 'conspiracy.' As the Hebrew text seems to be unsound, it has been proposed by Secker to read in place of the word for 'conspiracy' in the Hebrew text the word for 'holy,' at one time (1884) with Cheyne's approval. The reference to God as a 'sanctuary' in verse 14 gives some support to this suggestion. At the same time it somewhat disturbs the course of the thought, and the reading of our Hebrew text 'conspiracy' is well suited to the conditions of the year 735–4, when the people spoke in tones of alarm (vii. 2) of the confederation of the two northern kings. On the other hand Duhm, who holds to this reading of our Hebrew text in verse 12, carries out the idea consistently and boldly by amending verse 13. Instead of the Hebrew word *taḳdîshû*, 'regard as holy,' he would read *taḳshîrû*, 'regard as conspirator.'

and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread. And 14
he shall be for a sanctuary; but for a stone of stumbling
and for a rock of offence to both the houses of Israel, for
a gin and for a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem.
And many shall stumble thereon, and fall, and be broken, 15
and be snared, and be taken.

He believes that Isaiah coined a new word. 'One may credit a new and special revelation with an original phrase, a new, drastic, pregnant word. Yahweh is the conspirator who will be to the two houses of Israel a stone of stumbling and a snare. Not Aḥaz, Rezin, Peḳaḥ, Tiglath-Pileser guide the course of history: they are all only instruments in the hands of Yahweh.' This is certainly a bold yet attractive conception of Yahweh as the august ally or confederate whose schemes are alone worthy of consideration or dread. If Judah is under His protection, why dread any confederacy of neighbouring kings? Yahweh alone is worthy of fear.

14. 'And he shall serve as a sanctuary . . .
Yet shall he become a stone for collision . . .
And a rock for stumbling for the two houses of Israel,
And a trap and snare for the inhabitant of Jerusalem.'

Duhm, as might be expected, rids himself of the first clause, 'he shall become a sanctuary,' since it disturbs his conception of the sense. He regards the word *miḳdāsh*, **sanctuary,** as arising through a corrupted dittography of the word *môkesh*, **snare,** which occurs later in the verse. But critical licence here overruns due bounds. The word *miḳdāsh* means a *protecting sanctuary*, an *asylum*: Ezek. xi. 16; cf. Exod. xxi. 14; 1 Kings i. 50; and the conception is appropriate in this special connexion, and follows quite naturally upon the last clause of verse 13. It is probable, however, that a few words have fallen out, as it seems to be the beginning of an incomplete line.

15. A. V. renders the Heb. *bām* 'among them,' and this is also the rendering of Luther, Ewald, Delitzsch, Duhm, and Marti; the pronoun will refer to the two houses of Israel. This interpretation is supported by LXX. But R. V. renders by **thereon, i.e.** upon them, viz. upon the stone and snares referred-to in the preceding verse. This translation, or 'through them,' 'by their means,' is advocated by Dillmann and Kittel. The position of the word in the Hebrew text favours this latter interpretation. It seems to be connected more naturally with the verb which precedes than with the word for 'many' which follows. Lastly, the accentuation of the Hebrew text clearly favours the latter view.

16 Bind thou up the testimony, seal the law among my
17 disciples. And I will wait for the LORD, that hideth his
face from the house of Jacob, and I will look for him.
18 Behold, I and the children whom the LORD hath given
me are for signs and for wonders in Israel from the LORD
of hosts, which dwelleth in mount Zion.
19 And when they shall say unto you, Seek unto them

Verses 16–18. The immediate future is dark, and there is no ray of hope. The king and his court, followed by a subservient people, heed not the words of the prophet or his signs. Aḥaz had already refused to 'put Yahweh to the proof' (vii. 12), and had definitely resolved upon his course of action, reliance upon the strong arm of Assyria. The people had no leaders (cf. iii. 1–5), and resorted to the grossest superstitions. Isaiah was regarded at this time as a mere visionary. Probably his public utterances ceased for a while.

16. The imperative may be regarded as an injunction by the prophet addressed to one of his disciples. The word **Bind** implies the tying up of the parchment or papyrus roll (Heb. *megillah*) in which the oracles were written, and which was likewise to be kept sealed up and preserved among the prophet's disciples. The word rendered **law** here, as in previous cases (i. 10, v. 24), means the instruction of the prophet. On parchment rolls cf. *Hebrew Antiquities* (Rel. Tract Soc. Primer), p. 129.

17. I will look for him: i. e. with expectant hope, though king and people are unbelieving.

18. Isaiah's own name may, perhaps, have not been the original name he bore, but have been assumed by himself or conferred by God after the consecration-vision. It means 'help (or deliverance) of Yahweh,' and, like Sheār-yāshûbh and Mahēr-shālāl-ḥāsh-baz, was prophetic. They were signs and wonders (portents) manifesting God's purpose. This combination 'signs and wonders' frequently meets us in Deuteronomy (iv. 34, vii. 19, xxvi. 8, xxix. 2, xxxiv. 11), represented by σημεῖα καὶ τέρατα in LXX.

'Yahweh who dwells in Zion,' the God not only of judgments and visitations, but also of righteous rule and moral restoration, cf. ii. 2-4, iv. 2–4, xi. 9. With this last watchword of hope and final victory the prophet closes his word of prophecy for a certain interval. Already more than a century before the Reformation of Josiah (associated with the Book of Deuteronomy) the prophet regards Zion as God's true place of abode and manifestation of His power.

Verses 19–22 are a fragment from some later discourse, the date of that have familiar spirits and unto the wizards, that chirp and that mutter: should not a people seek unto their God? on behalf of the living *should they seek* unto the

which it would be impossible to define. It might belong to a later period in the reign of Aḥaz, after the capture of Samaria (721), when Judah would feel the stress of great apprehension. Or it might be placed later still, in the early years of Ḥezekiah's reign. In those days necromancy became the resource of a large number of distressed and dejected men and women, who resorted to these abnormal modes of probing into the future and the unknown. See *Necromancy* at the end of article 'Sorcery' in Hastings' *DB*. The reign of Aḥaz was prolific in the tendency to magic rites, borrowed either from North Arabia or Babylonia (cf. chap. ii. 6), and the king's own proneness to adopt foreign modes of cultus would stimulate the tendency (2 Kings xvi. 10). While there is no evidence that the prophet denounced the ordinary calling of the soothsayer, whom he apparently regarded as one of the props of the social fabric (iii. 2, 3), and whose functions in the early days of the Hebrew monarchy were combined with that of the priest (1 Sam. *passim*), the practice of the necromancer came under a different category. The stern penalties of death were denounced against him and the sorcerer: Deut. xviii. 11 (cf. 1 Sam. xxviii. 9); Lev. xix. 31, xx. 6, 7.

19. Render: 'And when they say to you "Inquire of the spirits of the dead (*ôbôth*) and the necromancers who chirp and whisper; should not a people inquire of their *manes*, of the dead on behalf of the living?"' The word here rendered *manes* is the ordinary word for **God** (the plural form *Elōhîm*). In only one other O. T. passage it has this meaning of *manes* or spirits of the departed, viz. 1 Sam. xxviii. 13. But that is no evidence that this use of *Elōhîm* was not frequent and current. Later redactors of the Hebrew literature would, as far as possible, suppress such an employment of a word which was specially used to designate Yahweh, the God of the Hebrews. The peculiar meaning which here belongs to the word is to be connected with its not infrequent application to designate heathen deities; it is then construed with a plural adjective or verb: Exod. xii. 12, xxxiv. 15; Judges ix. 9, 13, &c. The worship of the *manes* of ancestors is reflected in the name *Rephâîm*, and in the images called *Terāphîm* preserved in the household (see articles under those names in Hastings' *DB*). The step from the use of Teraphim in divination to necromancy would not be a great one. There was evidently a growth in the prophetic reprobation of such practices. There is no proof that Isaiah or Hosea (cf. Hos. iii. 4) absolutely denounced Teraphim and soothsaying. Isa. iii. 3 would imply

20 dead? To the law and to the testimony! if they speak not according to this word, surely there is no morning for
21 them. And they shall pass through it, hardly bestead and hungry: and it shall come to pass that, when they shall be hungry, they shall fret themselves, and curse by their king and by their God, and turn their faces upward:
22 and they shall look unto the earth, and behold, distress and darkness, the gloom of anguish; and into thick darkness

---

that they were tolerated (cf. the invocation of saints or the worship of the Madonna at the present day among Roman Catholics). Yet in Jer. xxvii. 9; Ezek. xxi. 21; Isa. xlvii. 8-15, lvii. 3 we see the reflection of the growing puritanic spirit embodied in Deut. xviii. 9–13[1]. There is, however, a difference in Isaiah's attitude towards the practice of necromancy as compared with soothsaying. The latter Isaiah appears to have tolerated in his day, but necromancy he utterly repudiates and denounces.

20. With thunder-tones the prophet answers the shallow plea: 'To the instruction and the testimony!' In place of the dark whispering ritual of the necromancer, to which the unbelieving court and people resorted in their despair, let them seek their own God and the revelations of His will through the prophets. Then, in reference to their pitiful argument, he adds: 'Surely they speak after this fashion for whom there is no dawn.' Endless, hopeless night has settled on their soul. They look not to God, but to the dark sepulchres of the dead. It is necessary to substitute this rendering for that of the A. V. and R. V.

21. There is obviously a gap here in the text. **It** in the first clause probably refers to the land in which the people dwell. The prophet is describing the despairing plight of those who traverse the land, desolated apparently by the invader, with no trust in Israel's God.

21–22. And he passes through it hard pressed and famishing:
And when he is famished he frets himself,
And curses his king and his God,
And turns his face upward: and looks to the earth,
And behold, anguish and darkness, oppressive gloom;
And into darkness is he driven. . . .

As the wayfarer becomes more deeply involved in his distress and want, he vents himself in curses against his nation's King and

---

[1] So also Muḥammad in Ḳorân (Sur. v. 92) regards the divining-rods (*al-azlâm*) as an abominable work of Satan.

they shall be driven away. But there shall be no gloom 9
to her that was in anguish. In the former time he brought into contempt the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the latter time hath he made it glorious, by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, Galilee of the

---

God. Both are here associated. Even Aḥaz, who belonged to the stock of David, was God's anointed (or Messiah, Heb. *Mashîaḥ*). The Hebrew of the last two lines above translated is obscure and difficult, containing isolated expressions.

Chapter IX.

ix. 1-7. The opening verse of this chapter in our English Bible (as in the LXX) belongs to the close of chap. viii in the Hebrew text; but the position which is here given to it is to be preferred. We are now entering upon an entirely fresh oracle, probably composed by the prophet at a considerable interval—perhaps after the lapse of over thirty years since the sad forebodings which conclude chap. viii. At the same time, this opening verse was evidently intended not only to be introductory to what follows, but also to serve as a link to what precedes. It is retrospective as well as prospective, and indicates a contrast. This is clearly apparent from its use of the same (or similar) expressions as those which occurred in viii. 22. The mind of the writer evidently recurs to the phraseology of the preceding verse. It is doubtful whether Isaiah wrote it in the form in which the verse stands.

1. The opening Hebrew particle should be rendered **But** (R.V.) or 'Nevertheless' (A. V.), and not 'For,' as recent commentators hold. Again the phraseology is obscure and difficult. Probably the best rendering would be: 'Yet there is no gloom to the land that felt oppression. In the former time He did despite towards the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the latter He hath done honour, on the way to (or by) the sea, beyond the Jordan to the circuit of peoples.' In the first clause the preposition 'to' is attached to a feminine suffix, according to the punctuation of the Hebrew text, which seems to refer (like the phrase 'through it' in verse 21 above) to the land. It is possible, however, that we should punctuate the word as masculine: 'no gloom to him that felt oppression.' This would save us from the awkwardness of supplying a word which occurs subsequently in the verse, but a glance at the LXX rendering *τοῦτο πρῶτον π[ο]ίε[ι] ταχὺ ποίει . . .*, and the words that precede and follow in that version, clearly reveals that the Hebrew text at the close of viii. 22 and the whole of ix. 1 (viii. 23 in Heb.), except the last few words, is in a most confused state and very difficult to restore. The general sense of the

2 nations. The people that walked in darkness have seen
a great light: they that dwelt in the land of the shadow
3 of death, upon them hath the light shined. Thou hast

---

passage as it stands in the Hebrew text is fairly clear. In the former troubled days, preceding the downfall of Samaria, Tiglath-Pileser III had deprived the kingdom of Ephraim of its northern provinces (see Introduction), Zebulun and Naphtali. The ruin which Tiglath-Pileser had begun Sargon completed in 722. The subject of the verb in the expression 'He did despite' (or wrought humiliation) is, of course, Yahweh Himself, who made the kings of Assyria the instruments of His will. 'The circuit of peoples' is also referred to in 2 Kings xv. 29, where the loss of the provinces by the northern kingdom of Israel is specified. The Hebrew word for 'circuit' is the origin of the name **Galilee.** In the Greek of 1 Macc. v. 15 the same phrase that we have in this verse is reproduced; cf. Matt. iv. 12–16 where this passage is quoted. The 'peoples' here referred-to mean the foreign populations of mixed character, Canaanite, Aramean, and perhaps Hittite, who inhabited those northern districts. Solomon gave the Phoenician Hiram twenty towns in this region (1 Kings ix. 11). Moreover, the Assyrians probably planted eastern populations there after its conquest (cf. 2 Kings xvii. 24). The 'way to (or by) the sea' may refer, as Dillmann thinks, to the Sea of Galilee on its western side (so Rashi), or (with Guthe and Marti) to the caravan-track from Damascus to the Mediterranean, which crossed the Jordan north of the Sea of Galilee by the so-called 'bridge of the daughters of Jacob'; see Bädeker's map of Galilee in his *Palestine and Syria.*

2–7. But now follows a great change. Light in place of darkness, and the rule of an ideal Messianic King, either already or soon to be born, who shall establish a reign of justice and equity after the yoke of Israel's oppressor has been broken.

2. 'Walking' and 'dwelling' are synonymous terms for 'living.' The 'land of death-shades' may be a recurrence to the thought of the previous chapter—the dark world of necromancy and despair. The spirits of the dead, like the *jinn* of the Arabian desert, haunted lonely dark defiles (such as the valley of Rephaim south-west of Jerusalem). These phantoms of dark despair would vanish in the dawn of the new day. The LXX seem to have had a slightly different text, in which the people are apostrophized: 'O people that walk in darkness, behold a great light; and ye who dwell in the land of death-shade, a light shineth on you.' Only a single character in the Hebrew text requires change in order to support this rendering, which is perhaps the right one.

3. Following the emendation of Krochmal, we obtain a rhythmic multiplied the nation, thou hast increased their joy: they joy before thee according to the joy in harvest, as men rejoice when they divide the spoil. For the yoke of 4 his burden, and the staff of his shoulder, the rod of his oppressor, thou hast broken as in the day of Midian.

and complete parallelism, a brilliant conjecture which with almost absolute certainty restores to us the original text:—

Thou hast magnified the exultation,
Thou hast increased the joy.

Of course, it is Yahweh who is here addressed. The joy of harvest-time became proverbial; so also the reference to dividing the spoil: for the former cf. Hos. ix. 1; Ps. iv. 7, cxxvi. 6; and for the latter Ps. cxix. 162. The prophet is thinking either of the harvest festival in May (Feast of Weeks), or of *Booths* in the autumn. The language points more decisively to the former; but the latter was the more characteristic festival of pre-exilian Israel.

4. the yoke of his burden is a characteristic Hebraism for the yoke which rests as a burden on the back of the people referred to in verse 2. Similarly **the staff of his shoulder** means the staff which strikes his shoulder. The **rod** was in reality a very formidable weapon, viz. a club or mace, about two feet long, which often had a large number of heavy iron nails driven into its round head ('Neil,' *Palestine Explored*, p. 262). The word is translated 'sceptre,' Num. xxiv. 17; Gen. xlix. 10; Isa. xiv. 5; Ezek. xix. 11, 14, &c. A representation is given of this club, called in Heb. *shēbhet*, in Hastings' *DB.*, art. *Rod* (cf. footnote to x. 5). **Day of Midian**, like 'slaughter of Midian' (x. 26), became proverbial of a great overthrow in battle. Isaiah may have relied upon the traditions respecting the event, incorporated in Judges vi–viii. It is possible that the signal chastisement inflicted by Israel, described in Num. xxxi, was in the mind of the prophet as well as the narratives contained in Judges associated with the name of Gideon. The locality of the tribe of Midian was a shifting one, as befitted a race of nomads, but the O.T. notices (see Nöldeke's article 'Midian' in *Enc. Bibl.*) point to the conclusion that their original settlements were somewhere north-east of the Sinaitic Desert between Edom and Paran (Gen. xxxvii. 28, 36; Exod. iii. 1; 1 Kings xi. 18; Hab. iii. 7)[1].

---

[1] Winckler thinks Midian is frequently written in old passages where originally there stood Ma'în (*Ma'ân*); cf. LXX on Judges x. 12 and *KAT.*^{3}, p. 143. This Midian belongs therefore to the North Arabian (*mât*) Muṣri, and is identified with Muṣrân; see Hommel, *Aufsätze u. Abhandll.*, ii. p. 231.

5 For all the armour of the armed man in the tumult, and
the garments rolled in blood, shall even be for burning,
6 for fuel of fire. For unto us a child is born, unto us a son
is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder:
and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor,

---

5. The marg. of the R.V. is nearer to the correct rendering. **armour** is now known to be a wrong rendering (based on LXX). The Assyrian word *šênu* (see Delitzsch, *Handwörterbuch*) means a shoe or sandal. Perhaps the kind here meant was the 'more serviceable and not uncommon variety seen to advantage in the footgear of Ashurbanipal's warriors. Over a kind of tight-fitting bandage enveloping the leg is a boot reaching midway up the back of the calf' (*Enc. Bibl.*, 'Shoes'). Translate:—

'For every boot of him that goes booted in the din, and cloak
rolled in blood,
Shall be for burning, fuel of fire.'

The word rendered 'din' is very expressive, and is employed to express the rattling of war-chariots: Nah. iii. 2; Jer. xlvii. 3. The cloak or mantle here is the military mantle of thick texture worn by the Assyrian soldiery (see article 'Siege' in *Enc. Bibl.* and bas-relief on black obelisk of Shalmaneser in the Nimrûd gallery of the British Museum).

This verse, like the previous, beginning with **For**, gives the reason for the great rejoicing. Assyria, the destructive, warlike nation, is overthrown like Midian by Israel, and with it all the materials and elements of war.

6. Who brings about this great overthrow? Another verse beginning with **For** announces the advent of a great hero-prince:—

'For a child is born to us, a son is given to us;
And royal authority comes upon his shoulder:
And his name is called Wondrous Counsellor,
Hero-God, Father for ever, Prince of Peace.'

The perfect tense in the original, corresponding to **is born, is given,** is not unusual in Hebrew. This 'prophetic perfect' is employed to express the intense and vivid realization of the impending event. If this prophecy was composed by Isaiah it is not improbable that he thought of a young monarch to be born to Ḥezekiah who would complete the overthrow of Assyria. The withdrawal of the Assyrian army after the battle of Altaḳû (see Introduction) might well have awakened great hopes of the ultimate downfall of the enemy through the 'Divine Hero.' Of this downfall Isaiah had already given a clear intimation in the oracle x. 5–15.

Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of 7
the increase of his government and of peace there shall

The 'royal authority' was borne upon the shoulder under the material symbol of a royal robe or mantle. In xxii. 22 we find that the symbol of office is the key of David's house, borne upon the shoulder, where, however, it is the subordinate office of palace overseer which is referred to.

The Hebrew *ēl gibbōr* gives the title of Divine warrior-hero to the ideal ruler, and evidently points to great military achievements whereby the power of the Assyrian foe has been utterly broken. But a glance at the LXX shows that they had quite a different text before them at the close of this verse, since their rendering is: 'I will bring peace to the rulers and health to himself[1]'; but there is uncertainty as to the Greek text of the LXX itself. The expression in our Massoretic Hebrew text 'Father for ever' (**Everlasting Father**) is certainly enigmatic. (We may dismiss 'Father of booty,' on the basis of Gen. xlix. 27, as a most improbable rendering.) The phrase seems to mean: Father who tends and cares for his people for ever; compare the expression 'mistress for ever' in Isa. xlvii. 7. But the text is far from certain.

7. We have some indication of textual confusion in the curious orthography of the Hebrew text that meets the eye at the opening of this verse, whether through dittography or some other cause. Render: 'Great is the rule, and of peace there is no end . . .'

It has been already stated that several recent critics (notably Hackmann, Cheyne, Marti, and Volz) have argued that these verses at the opening of chap. ix were not written by Isaiah. The chief arguments may be found summarized in Marti's commentary, and they are stated for the English reader with more critical caution in Cheyne's *Introduction*, pp. 44 foll.

(1) It is asserted that Isaiah's hopes were centred on Yahweh and on a religious community without political organization (viii. 16–18), never on the Davidic royal house and on political influence. On the other hand, the Messiah of Isa. ix. 1–7 is a completely political personality, and has no direct religious significance. Indeed, Marti regards it as thoroughly Jewish in sentiment; while Isaiah's standpoint was more akin to that of Jesus, whose kingdom was not of this world.

But these are very one-sided statements. That Isaiah had little hope of political organization during the reign of Ahaz is probably true, and viii. 16–18 reflects the prophet's sentiment at that be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to establish it, and to uphold it with judgement

---

[1] Reading apparently in Hebrew, אביא לשרים שלום ולו מרפא, in which we pass over from the end of verse 6 to the beginning of verse 7.

---

time. It is true that at a later period the prophet (like Hosea before him) deprecated foreign alliances, especially with Egypt, and the dependence upon horses and chariots which such alliances involved (cf. xxx. 1-7, 15, 16, xxxi. 1-3). Yet this does not exclude political organization within Judah itself, resting on the presence and power of Yahweh. The part played by Isaiah during the invasion of Sennacherib (701 B. C.), described in chaps. xxxvi-xxxix, rests upon a sound historical basis, though the account is obviously late; but this part is hardly consistent with the attitude of a disbeliever in political organization.

(2) The phrase 'jealous zeal of Yahweh' (ix. 7) is said to be a later expression, and was first employed by Ezekiel (xxxvi. 5 foll., xxxviii. 19, xxxix. 25; Isa. xlii. 13; Zech. i. 14, viii. 2). But though this is in the main true, the employment of the word a century earlier by Isaiah is surely quite admissible. Indeed, he may have given currency to a phrase which is eminently consistent with his conception of the 'Holy One of Israel' (xxx. 11, 15); cf. note on vi. 3. This latter title became current in Deutero-Isaiah.

(3) 'Neither Jeremiah nor Ezekiel nor Deutero-Isaiah know anything of this prophecy.' This is the familiar *argumentum ex silentio*, which is extremely hazardous when applied to O. T. literature. But is it quite certain that the first two prophets knew nothing of it? Jer. xxx. 9, in its reference to 'David their king' (a passage that Cornill in his critical edition allows to have been written by Jeremiah), appears to be using language expressive of ideas familiar to Jeremiah's countrymen, and the same remark applies to Ezek. xxxiv. 23-25. Ezekiel was notoriously a literary prophet. His borrowings from Jeremiah are obvious, and the closing verse of the passage above cited is surely an echo of Isa. ix. 7 and xi. 6-9. With reference to the Deutero-Isaiah, no argument can well be based upon literature that belongs to a different stadium of Israel's history, when the ideals of the old national life had passed away and the new conception of Jehovah's suffering and righteous servant took their place.

(4) In answer to the question, When did this prophecy arise? Marti acknowledges that it is difficult to give a definite reply. In his *Gesch. der Israel. Religion*, p. 255, he hazards the opinion that it was composed in the same years that witnessed the introduction of the Mosaic law by Ezra. In his commentary he says: 'The century 540-440 B. C. seems in reality to correspond best to the utterances of Isa. ix. 1-6. Their contents lead us into the circle of ideas in Haggai and Zechariah. In both we find the hope of a Messiah of Davidic lineage, who is seen in the person of the

and with righteousness from henceforth even for ever.
The zeal of the LORD of hosts shall perform this.

Davidic Zerubbabel: Hag. ii. 21–23; Zech. iv. 6, vi. 12. Zechariah follows Jer. xxiii. 5, xxxiii. 15 in calling him "Sprout"' (cf. Isa. xi. 1).

But a careful examination of these parallels clearly shows that they contain no real analogy. If we were concerned with Hag. ii. 21–23 only, and without reference to the historic situation, a specious argument might be advanced, but the Zechariah passages dispel the illusion. Just as the secular prince in Ezekiel's ideal scheme (chaps. xl–xlviii) falls into the background and his functions are restricted and subordinated to the ecclesiastical routine (xlvi. 10–18), so the figure of Zerubbabel in Zechariah (chaps. iv and vi) is portrayed with the rising temple-walls in the background. The nation which he leads is a church-nation, and there is another figure destined speedily to overshadow his own, that of Joshua the High Priest (chap. iii). It is only in Hag. ii. 22 that we see a pale reflection of the rapidly vanishing portraiture of the national warrior-hero of the seed of David in Isa. ix. 1–7 and xi. 1–9. But these are not the only passages with which Cheyne and Marti are concerned. Both these critics assign Isa. lx–lxii, with the rest of the 'Trito-Isaiah' (chaps. lvi–lxvi), to the century 540–440 B. C. If so, these great lyrical compositions must be included in our survey. But *no Messianic personality* appears in them. Even the 'sure mercies of David' (lv. 3) are for the time forgotten. It is quite true that we have the prophet herald (lxi. 1, 10, lxii. 1, 6) and also the priests (lxi. 6). Also we have the sanctuary of Zion and its altar (lx. 7, 13, lxi. 6, xii. 9); and the whole scene is flooded with the Divine presence nd glory. Moreover, we have dim perspectives of the nations nd their products flocking in (a reflection of Isa. ii. 2, 3); but here is no earthly throne or warrior-prince. A survey of the iterary products and historic environment of the first post-exilian entury leads us irresistibly to the conclusion that the clear and resh portraiture of Isa. ix. 1–7 and xi. 1–9 could not have emerged om that age, but from the age of Ḥezeḳiah when a momentary heck to the career of Sennacherib raised the hopes which find xpression in x. 5 foll., xxxi. 5, 8.

Cheyne himself (*Introduction*, p. 44 foll.) observes that 'a number f late writers regarded ix. 1–7 as Isaiah's.' He cites x. 26 and iv. 5 where the parallels are somewhat slight, and xxxvii. 32 where is very apparent. Nor is he deeply impressed by the linguistic gument. The unusual word for military shoe or boot (which ght probably to be pronounced *sên*) is not a late Aramaic word, t a loan-word imported in the lifetime of Isaiah from Assyria.

8 The Lord sent a word into Jacob, and it hath lighted

Lastly, some such ideal portraiture was needed to give completeness to the Immanuel prophecy. Apart from it the utterance in chaps. vii, viii becomes a *vox et praeterea nil.* Well might the disciples of the prophet press for some further disclosure as to the import of the 'sign' as the century drew near to its close, and the evening of his own life approached. Certainly something more complete was needed, and a prophet, endowed with such an artistic sense as Isaiah clearly reveals, would not rest satisfied with a vague torso. That the completed conception of his later days exhibits a certain progress of ideas and a more secular consciousness is in no way surprising. Riper experience gave the prophet a stronger grip of the realities of life, as well as a clearer conception of what his earlier spiritual ideals meant when translated into action. For Isaiah was a prophet of action as well as of ideals, and the close of the century in the reign of Ḥezekiah, when the forces of Sennacherib had withdrawn, was not like the decennium 735-725 in the reign of Aḥaz (with which chaps. vi-viii are concerned), an age of impenetrable gloom[1]. See Introduction.

With this beautiful utterance belonging to the old age of the prophet, the original 'Book of Immanuel' (vi—ix. 7), as we have ventured to call it, beginning with gloom and ending with sunshine, comes to a close.

We now come to another series of oracles which similarly close with another Isaianic poem of hope, xi. 1-9.

CHAPTER IX. 8 (7 Heb.)—X. 4.

We now pass to a beautiful poem of four strophes, with a refrain at the end of each strophe. The poem is a fragment, the close of which has been fortunately preserved. We have already studied the concluding portion in v. 25-30, and have previously had occasion to show (see Introduction, p. 14, ff.) that the allusions and descriptive elements of this poem are best explained by assuming for it the date 726 B. C. The close, which vividly portrays the impending advance of an Assyrian army (v. 27-30), was based on the experience of the Assyrian foe already acquired by the inhabitants of Palestine in the events of the year 734-3, when the northern kingdom was bereft of its northern

---

[1] On this controversy the reader is referred to the admirably clear and judicious survey of the question in Prof. G. Adam Smith's article 'Isaiah' in Hastings' *DB.*, p. 487 foll.; and to the present writer's article on Cheyne's *Introduction to Isaiah* in the *Critical Review*, July 1895, p. 230 foll.

upon Israel. And all the people shall know, *even* Ephraim 9
and the inhabitant of Samaria, that say in pride and in
stoutness of heart, The bricks are fallen, but we will build 10
with hewn stone: the sycomores are cut down, but we
will change them into cedars. Therefore the LORD shall 11

---

and transjordanic provinces. Ephraim, with its capital Samaria, was still left, and it is to be noticed that these are specially referred to in verse 9 (8 Heb.). The events of the invasion of 734–3 were already about eight years old, Tiglath-Pileser was dead (727 B. C.), and relief from the heavy hand of Assyrian rule was anticipated by the vassal-state Ephraim. The little kingdom began to breathe again. It was beginning to recover in a material sense, and, in their optimistic pride, many of the inhabitants were saying as they looked back on the disasters of 734–3, 'Bricks have fallen, but with hewn stone will we build . . ,' verse 10 (9 Heb.). We may therefore assume that this poem, directed against the blind optimism and arrogance of the northern kingdom, was composed about 726 B. C.

First Strophe (8–12). Ephraim's arrogance. Foes shall spring up all around him.

'A word hath the Lord sent against Jacob,
And it shall fall on Israel.'

The 'word' is here almost materialized, as though it were a bolt descending from the sky; and such in fact was the semi-magical conception of names, words, and curses in primitive Israel; see Gray's instructive remarks in *Numbers* (on xxii. 6) on the power of the blessing or the curse, p. 327 foll. (cf. pp. 54, 74). The LXX punctuated differently, and rendered 'plague' (death) instead of 'word.' On the refrain cf. Ḳorân Sur. 77; Amos i, ii, iv. 6 foll. &c.

9. shall know: i. e. shall perceive the word that God has sent, and become aware of its effect.

10. The words of this verse are held by Duhm to be those of a popular ditty. They evidently bear reference to the events of the recent past. The dwellings of sun-dried bricks shall be replaced by statelier houses of hewn stone. The common sycomore woodwork shall be exchanged for cedar. The Israelite peasant-cultivator of the soil probably lived, like the fellahin of Palestine at the present day, in primitive structures of mud or sunburnt brick, while the wood employed was the sycomore, the commonest and cheapest timber in Canaan (1 Kings x. 27). The ambitious Ephraimite boasts that better buildings shall arise than those destroyed by the Assyrians.

set up on high against him the adversaries of Rezin, and
12 shall stir up his enemies; the Syrians before, and the
Philistines behind; and they shall devour Israel with
open mouth. For all this his anger is not turned away,
but his hand is stretched out still.

11–12. The LXX point out approximately the original text:

> 'And Yahweh will raise up the enemies of Mount Zion against him (i. e. Ephraim),
> And his foes will He goad on;
> Syria before, and the Philistines behind;
> And they devour Israel with full mouth.'

It is quite evident that the Hebrew Massoretic text, upon which A. V. and R. V. are based, has become corrupted and so unintelligible. Rezin ruled over Syria, and therefore the enumeration of Syria as one of his enemies can have no meaning. The Philistines, moreover, were rather his allies in the war against Aḥaz, if we can trust the secondary historic tradition of 2 Chron. xxviii. 18[1] (a late and post-exilian document), which we have good reason to regard as valid in this case, for the Philistine towns were opposed in later days to Sargon and Sennacherib, and would therefore probably join Rezin's anti-Assyrian coalition (see Introduction). These considerations clearly show that the reading 'enemies of Mount Zion' is correct. Those who were formerly, in the Syro-Ephraimite war of 735, enemies of Zion, are now to be made by Yahweh enemies of Ephraim itself instead of allies. Probably they would be sufficiently cowed by the disastrous events of 734–2 to unite with Assyria against their old ally. How far this actually took place in the events of 724–1 we cannot in the absence of historic data determine.

In spite of all these blows of Divine disciplinary chastisement God's wrath against Ephraim does not cease. His hand of power is still stretched out to smite. The expression 'turned away' is not an exact reproduction of the original. It should be 'has not turned back,' or 'returned,' i. e. abated. Similarly in Gen. xxvii. 44 foll., 'till his (i. e. Esau's) wrath has abated,' *lit.* 'returned' (viz. back to Esau himself, the personal source from which it proceeded). All this language is based on primitive materialistic and often magical ideas respecting the power which goes forth from a man in the words he utters. Thus in Isa. lv. 11, the word goes forth from God like rain or snow, and does not return to Him

---

[1] Verse 17 raises the question whether instead of Aram (*Syria*) in our Isaianic text there ought here, as in other cases, to be read *Edom*.

Yet the people hath not turned unto him that smote 13
them, neither have they sought the LORD of hosts. There- 14
fore the LORD will cut off from Israel head and tail, palm-
branch and rush, in one day. [R] The ancient and the 15
honourable man, he is the head; and the prophet that
teacheth lies, he is the tail. [I] For they that lead this 16
people cause them to err; and they that are led of them
are destroyed. Therefore the Lord shall not rejoice over 17
their young men, neither shall he have compassion on their
fatherless and widows: for every one is profane and an

---

and cease to operate. Note the language with which this oracle opens, verse 8 (7 Heb.).

Second Strophe (13–17). Fatal delusions prevalent among all ranks of society.

13. The perfect tenses of the original are prophetic. They point to the future.

'Yet the people returneth not (or will not return) to Him that smiteth,' i. e. will not be converted from evil ways through the discipline of chastisement.

14. head and tail, palm-branch and rush may have been a current mode of metaphorical speech to describe all classes of society, high and low alike; cf. iii. 1 foll.

15 is evidently an explanatory gloss, written by some scribe or editor, and embodied in the text.

16. The leaders of the people prove themselves to be false guides. The language lacks definiteness. When we turn to the contemporary prophet of the northern kingdom, Hosea (xii. 1 (2 Heb.), cf. viii. 9), we might infer that the prophet Isaiah is here referring to the vain policy of the party which sought to lean on Assyria for aid, or to that of the opposing party which proposed to conclude an alliance with Egypt. To both policies Isaiah, like Hosea, was sternly opposed. This verse also is doubted by some critics (Duhm, Marti), but the grounds are not equally cogent.

17. shall not rejoice over, or 'not delight in,' is considered to be a weak phrase by most recent critics, e. g. Cheyne, Kittel, Duhm, and Marti; consequently they would follow Lagarde in substituting in the original another verb, 'shall not spare,' which gives a powerful and vivid sense. But the LXX support the present reading of our Hebrew text, for which many parallels may be found in the O. T. (e. g. Ps. cxxii. 1; 2 Sam. xv. 26. &c.). There is no need for change.

evil-doer, and every mouth speaketh folly. For all this his anger is not turned away, but his hand is stretched out still.

18 For wickedness burneth as the fire; it devoureth the briers and thorns: yea, it kindleth in the thickets of the forest, and they roll upward in thick clouds of smoke.
19 Through the wrath of the LORD of hosts is the land burnt up: the people also are as the fuel of fire; no man spareth
20 his brother. And one shall snatch on the right hand, and be hungry; and he shall eat on the left hand, and they shall not be satisfied: they shall eat every man the flesh
21 of his own arm: Manasseh, Ephraim; and Ephraim, Manasseh: and they together shall be against Judah.

Third Strophe (18-21). A lurid image of a forest-fire. The thickets are in flames, and dense volumes of smoke are rolling upwards. The internal condition of Israel is a state of blazing anarchy. The fury of faction leaves no room for pity between man and man, and engenders insatiable greed. As a finishing touch to the picture, we find the northern kingdom not only at war with itself, but also at enmity with its southern neighbours.

18. in thick clouds: or better, 'a tall column of smoke.'

19. R.V. **burnt up** follows the LXX. A.V. renders by 'darkened,' while Targ. and Jerome by 'distracted.' The original Hebrew word is found here only, and is quite obscure as to meaning.

20. The social disorders are now depicted. Here the parallels from the contemporary prophet of the northern kingdom will be found useful. Hosea describes the murders committed by bands of priests on the way to Shechem, the pilgrims to that shrine being probably the victims (iv. 2, vi. 8, 9; cf. xii. 7, 8).

For **snatch** read 'hew.' At the close of the verse we ought probably to follow the hint of LXX(A), and read by omitting a single character of the original Hebrew text: 'They shall eat every man the flesh of his neighbour.' This restores the harmony and parallelism of the verse (cf. verse 21), and removes the awkward expression 'flesh of his arm,' in which arm can only be metaphorically taken to mean 'friend' or 'helper.'

21. It is not easy to indicate what inter-tribal feuds between Manasseh and Ephraim are here meant. The story of Gen. xlviii. 14 foll. seems to point to some rivalry between the two tribes (cf. Gen. xxvii). Judges viii. 1 foll., in which the indignation of

For all this his anger is not turned away, but his hand is stretched out still.

Woe unto them that decree unrighteous decrees, and 10
to the writers that write perverseness: to turn aside the 2
needy from judgement, and to take away the right of the
poor of my people, that widows may be their spoil, and
that they may make the fatherless their prey! And what 3
will ye do in the day of visitation, and in the desolation
which shall come from far? to whom will ye flee for help?
and where will ye leave your glory? They shall only bow 4

Ephraim against Gideon, of the tribe of Manasseh, is recounted, points to the same conclusion.

Chapter X.

Fourth Strophe (1–4). A denunciation of the legislators and judges who defraud the weak and defenceless.

1. The rulers are here referred to, not so much in their character of judges as of legislators. The rules and regulations which they drew up were for the benefit of the rich and powerful. They were 'recorders who kept on recording bane' and distress for the poor and weak. 'There must have existed in Israel at that time a considerable amount of written law' (Duhm), but it was evidently 'class legislation' of an oppressive character[1].

2. The last clause should read: 'while the orphans they plunder.'

3. For **desolation** read 'storm'; and for **glory** 'possessions.'

4. A very ingenious suggestion has been made by Lagarde *Academy*, Dec. 15, 1870) which certainly remedies the somewhat difficult construction of the opening words of this verse. By a slight alteration of punctuation and arrangement of the down under the prisoners, and shall fall under the slain. For all this his anger is not turned away, but his hand is stretched out still.

---

[1] Giesebrecht (*Beiträge zur Jesaiakritik*, p. 13) endeavours to how that these verses are the beginning of a lost oracle against udah, to which the refrain, familiar to the readers of the preceding oem, came to be attached by an editor who by mistake combined it ith ix. 8–21. It is quite true that the oppression of the widow and phan and of the poor (verse 2) was a vice prevailing in Judah (i. 17, . 15, v. 7, 8); but a glance at the oracles of Amos directed against e northern kingdom (e.g. ii. 8, iii. 10, iv. 1, v. 11, &c.) shows that equally prevailed there. Moreover, the same metre is found in 1–4 as in ix. 8 foll.

5 Ho Assyrian, the rod of mine anger, the staff in whose

---

characters of the Hebrew, he obtains the rendering: 'Belti bows down, Osiris is broken.' Belti was an Egyptian goddess, the feminine counterpart of Bêl or Baal. The influence of the Egyptian cults in Phoenicia is well known. According to Pietschmann (*Gesch. der Phönizier*, p. 271), the worship of both Osiris and Baalat (or Belti) was carried on in the Phoenician city of Byblus or Gebal. The northern or Ephraimite kingdom, since the time of Jeroboam I, was likewise exposed to Egyptian influence, though to a less extent, and the negotiations for an alliance with Egypt at this date (726 B. C.), to which the prophet Hosea makes repeated reference (vii. 11, xii. 1), doubtless served to increase that influence. There are, therefore, certain grounds of internal probability that Lagarde's conjecture is correct. At the same time it is encountered by serious objections: (1) The mention of these Egyptian deities is entirely unprecedented in the O. T., and in *pre-exilian* literature has no parallel. It is only in the Deutero-Isaiah xlvi. 1 that the Babylonian deities Bêl and Nebo are mentioned as suffering downfall. (2) The proposed emendation somewhat disturbs the parallelism and symmetry of the verse.

The construction is certainly difficult, and must be linked to the preceding verse thus: 'Unto whom are ye to flee for help, and where are ye to leave your possessions?' And the answer follows: (Nowhere) 'except one cowers[1] under the prisoners, and falls under the slain.' The Hebrew idiom finds a parallel in Gen. xliii. 3. On the other hand, when we turn to the LXX we find full justification for the gravest doubts as to the integrity of our text. The shortness of this strophe and of that which follows in chap. v. 25, combined with the peculiar features of this verse, clearly prove that this part of the poem has been sadly mutilated.

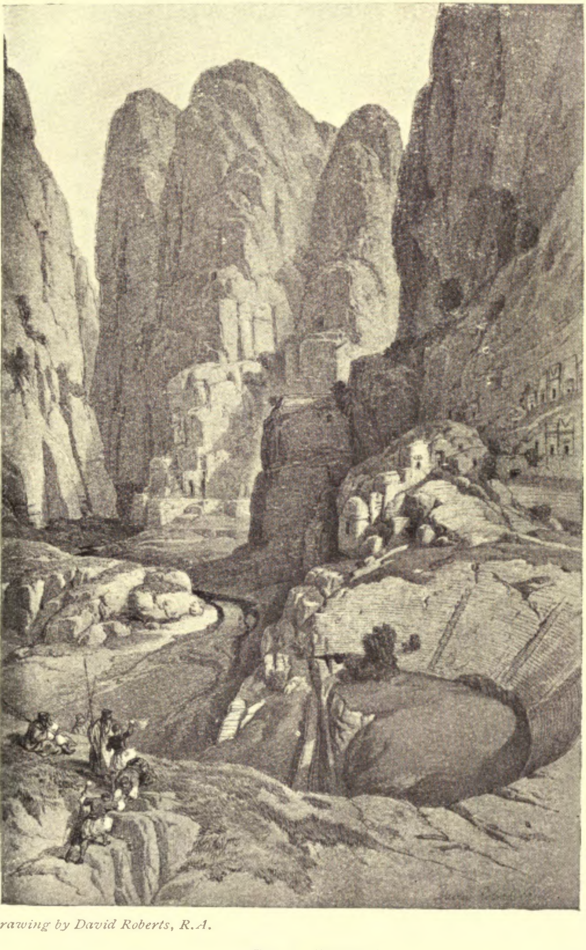
Verses 3 foll. show that the prophet anticipated that 'the day of visitation' would take the form of foreign invasion. This becomes still clearer at the close of the poem (chap. v. 26–30), where the advance of the (Assyrian) foes is described.

CHAPTER X. 5–34.

We now come to a collection of oracles of varied character, of

---

[1] In the first clause an imperfect must be read in place of the perfect, in correspondence with the imperfect in the second clause.



Drawing by David Roberts, R.A.

SELA (PETRA)

hand is mine indignation! I will send him against a 6

---

which in some cases the Isaianic authorship has been denied. They are directed against the pride of Assyria, and predict its downfall. The contents of these oracles point to a much later period than those of the preceding poem, ix. 8—x. 4. Verse 9, which Duhm recognizes as Isaianic, clearly proves that at least verses 5-15 must have been composed after 717 B. C., the year in which Karkemish was captured by Sargon (see note). It is not improbable that Isaiah composed the lines beginning x. 5 foll. after the death of Sargon. They may have been written shortly before the time when his successor Sennacherib was engaged in war with Merodach-Baladan (Marduk-abal-iddin), king of Babylon. This war was waged in 704 B. C. About this year, or a little earlier, the embassy of Merodach-Baladan to Hezekiah, described in 2 Kings xx; Isa. xxxviii (2 Chron. xxxii. 24 foll.), took place[1]. This was probably a time when the hopes of Judah revived. We might therefore date this prophecy 705-4 B. C. At this time the power of Egypt had been restored under the new twenty-fifth Ethiopian dynasty. See below, note on verse 20.

5. Owing to the addition of the words 'in their hand' by some Hebrew scribe or editor who wished to harmonize this verse with verse 24 (in which Assyria is said to be smiting Zion with its staff), the phraseology has become confused by the combination of two contradictory conceptions. The staff[2] is not in Assyria's hand, but Assyria itself is the staff in God's hand. Accordingly Duhm, who is now followed by Cheyne (*SBOT.*) as well as Marti, strikes the offending words out, and reads :—

'Woe Asshur, the rod of mine anger,
And the staff of my indignation!'

This is certainly clear and simple in construction. We would,

---

[1] Cf. Winckler, *Gesch. Babyloniens u. Assyriens*, pp. 129, 250 foll. It will be seen that we here recur to the view formerly advocated by Kuenen but since abandoned (*Historisch-kritische Einleitung, zweiter Teil*, p. 53). Probably the date of the entire collection of passages, verses 5-27, should be placed in the early part of Sennacherib's reign, near to the time of the embassy of Merodach-Baladan to Judah.

[2] The word in the first line rendered 'rod' (*shébhet*) denotes a formidable weapon, viz. a club or mace whose round end is studded with nails. See above, note on ix. 4. Its true character is best understood by a reference to Ps. ii. 9 and Egyptian monuments. See Wilkinson, *Manners and Customs of the Ancient Egyptians*, vol. i. p. 217.

profane nation, and against the people of my wrath will I give him a charge, to take the spoil, and to take the prey, and to tread them down like the mire of the streets.
7 Howbeit he meaneth not so, neither doth his heart think so; but it is in his heart to destroy, and to cut off nations
8 not a few. For he saith, Are not my princes all of them
9 kings? Is not Calno as Carchemish? is not Hamath as

---

however, suggest an alteration in the Hebrew not so drastic, and would render the second line:—

'And the staff in mine indignant hand!'

(*lit.* handof my indignation). Due metric length is thus maintained.

6. mire: properly 'clay.' **the people of my wrath** means the people against whom my wrath is directed, which evidently means Judah.

7. he meaneth not so: viz. to be merely the instrument in God's hands. Total destruction was not God's purpose in reference to Judah, but purification and discipline. Asshur, however, has purposes of his own.

8. The boastful self-aggrandizing thoughts of Asshur are here cited. The viceroys (*paḥatûti*) appointed by Assyrian monarchs over conquered towns and provinces are regarded as kings. The language here placed in the mouth of Assyria resembles that which, according to the historical narrative, appended by a later editor in xxxvii. 11 foll., was used by Rabshaḳeh to Ḥezeḳiah, which is obviously an echo of this passage and supplies an interesting commentary on it.

9. The cuneiform annals of Tiglath-Pileser and Sargon, combined with the Canon of Rulers, enable us to fix with precision the date of all the conquests to which this verse refers.

Carchemish is the Assyrian *Gargamis*, and is not, as was formerly supposed, Circesium, which was situated at the junction of the Chaboras (or Chabur) with the Euphrates, but much further to the north-east on the Euphrates stream. It is to be identified with the ruins at Jirbâs or Jerâbîs (called Europos by the Greeks), on the right bank of the river and a few miles north of its junction with the Sajûr. It was the capital city of the Hittites, and its king Pisiris is mentioned in the annals of Tiglath-Pileser as tributary in 743 and 738 B.C. But its final downfall belongs to the year 717 B.C., when its king Pisiris was taken prisoner and the Hittite empire became incorporated in the Assyrian; see Schrader, *COT.*, ii. p. 74 foll., and Winckler, *KAT.*^{3}, p. 68.

Kalnô. Schrader in *COT.*, ii. p. 74 refrains from identifying this

Arpad? is not Samaria as Damascus? As my hand hath 10
found the kingdoms of the idols, whose graven images
did excel them of Jerusalem and of Samaria; shall I not, 11
as I have done unto Samaria and her idols, so do to
Jerusalem and her idols?

Wherefore it shall come to pass, that when the Lord 12
hath performed his whole work upon mount Zion and on
Jerusalem, I will punish the fruit of the stout heart of the

Kalno. It is evidently quite distinct from the Kalneh of Gen. x. 10, which Fried. Delitzsch (*Parad.* p. 225) identified with Kulunu, a Babylonian town. The Kalno with which we are here concerned was in the Syrian or Hittite region. Winckler, in *KAT.*^{3}, p. 55, identifies it with one of the 'nineteen Hamathite towns' enumerated by Tiglath-Pileser called Kullani. He would read the Hebrew Kalnî instead of Kalnô. It was conquered by Tiglath-Pileser III in 738 B. C. Its further history we cannot trace.

Arpad was likewise subdued by Tiglath-Pileser (Canon of Rulers), but in later times Arpad, along with Samaria, is specially mentioned as aiding Ilu-bi'di of Hamath in an insurrectionary movement against Sargon (Khorsabad inscription, ll. 33 foll.). The defeat of Ilu-bi'di of Hamath, as well as of Arpad, took place in 720 B. C. (Schrader, *COT.*, ii. pp. 7 foll. and Winckler, *KAT.*^{3}, p. 66). Arpad lies south-west of Carchemish, and 13 miles north of Haleb. Its site is marked by the ruins of Tell Erfâd.

Hamath is frequently mentioned in the inscriptions of the Assyrian kings from the time of Ašurnaṣirpal (884–860 B. C.) downwards, and was repeatedly conquered and finally lost its independence in 720 B. C., as above stated. Its modern name is Hamah, and, like Carchemish, was Hittite.

Damascus, along with its king Rezin (Assyrian, Raṣunnu), was overthrown by Tiglath-Pileser III in the war of 734–2, while the downfall of *Samaria* took place in 721 (see Introduction).

10, 11. Read with R. V. (marg.) 'reached' instead of **found,** thereby substituting a more idiomatic rendering; and for **whose graven images** substitute the rendering 'though their graven images did excel, &c.; shall I not, &c. . . .' So ends the boast of Assyria, to be resumed in verse 13.

12. For **hath performed** read 'performs,' and for **I will punish** (the reading of the Heb. text) substitute the rendering of the LXX, 'He will punish,' thereby giving consistency of person to the sentence. These words have the appearance of having been supplied by the editor of Isaiah's oracles in his task of piecing them together.

13 king of Assyria, and the glory of his high looks. For he
hath said, By the strength of my hand I have done it,
and by my wisdom; for I am prudent: and I have
removed the bounds of the peoples, and have robbed
their treasures, and I have brought down as a valiant man
14 them that sit *on thrones*: and my hand hath found as a
nest the riches of the peoples; and as one gathereth eggs
that are forsaken, have I gathered all the earth: and

13. Once more the language of Assyrian boasting is heard: 'And I have removed the frontiers of nations, and their stores have I plundered[1].' The boundaries of nations were abolished through forcible annexation, so that the frontiers became practically non-existent. The stores were plundered as the result of the regular operations of war, the soldiers of the invading army feeding on the crops, fruit, cattle, and all produce they could take. See 'War' in *Enc. Bibl.* In this way Assyria was graphically called a 'razor that is hired' by Yahweh (vii. 20). The last clause of this verse is very obscure, and some words may have been omitted. By substituting another word for the Hebrew original of **valiant man**, some have extorted the rendering: 'and I have brought down into the dust (or ashes) their inhabitants.' Duhm, after making this substitution, translates:—

> 'And caused to sink down into ashes [the towns],
> . . . . those enthroned:'

holding that some words have been omitted.

14. Spoliation by the Assyrian has gone on unchecked and unresisted. In boastful language he compares the process to birds'-

---

[1] Of this many illustrations might be gathered from the Assyrian inscriptions. Thus in Ašurnaṣirpal's Annal-inscriptions (col. ii. 117), in describing the conquest of the land Naïri, he says: 'the harvest of their land I harvested.' In an earlier passage in the same document he says: 'their spoils, possessions, and cattle I plundered' (col. i. 48). Similarly Rammân(Adad)-nirâri III (812–783 B.C.), in one of his Kalaḥ inscriptions (Schrader, *KIB.*, i. p. 190), records his capture of spoil from the palace of Damascus, consisting of thousands of talents of gold, silver, copper and iron, finely wrought garments, and an ivory couch. The chief depositories of valuables were temples and royal palaces. In the great Khorsabad inscription of Sargon we read that the treasures of the palace of Urzana of Muṣaṣir, with wife, sons, and daughters, as well as gods, were carried off as plunder (ll. 75 foll.).

there was none that moved the wing, or that opened the mouth, or chirped. Shall the axe boast itself against him 15
that heweth therewith? shall the saw magnify itself against him that shaketh it? as if a rod should shake them that lift it up, *or* as if a staff should lift up *him that is* not wood.

Therefore shall the Lord, the LORD of hosts, send 16

---

nesting. 'There was none that fluttered wing, or opened mouth, or chirped.' Assyrian inscriptions present examples of the use of this very metaphor of a bird chased or attacked. Thus in a graphic passage of Ašur-naṣir-abal's Annals (col. i. 48–51) he recounts his expedition to the land Nummi: 'The inhabitants fled and occupied an inaccessible mountain. The mountain was very steep . . . The mountain's summit towered up like the point of an iron dagger, and not a winged bird of heaven comes to it. Like the nest of an Udini bird, they had set their stronghold in the mountain. Whither none among the kings my predecessors (*lit.* 'fathers') had penetrated (?), within three days the warrior ascended the mountain; longing in his brave heart for battle he mounted, with his feet trod the mountain, broke its nest[1].' Similarly in Sennacherib's account of his campaign against 'Hezeḳiah the Jew' (Taylor cyl., col. iii. 20), he says, 'Himself I shut like a bird in a cage in Jerusalem.' The phrase reminds us of the language of the Egyptian governor in Palestine, Rib-Addi, in his dispatches to the Egyptian king, in which he compares his forlorn beleaguered position, when hard pressed in Gebal by the forces of Abd-Aširta, to that of a 'bird sitting in a snare' (or, perhaps, wicker cage)[2]. These parallels show that the language of the Assyrian monarchs is faithfully reflected in Isaiah's oracle.

15. Assyria's egotism is here made the subject of a grotesque simile which exhibits the nation's pride in its true light as a monstrous inversion of actual relations.

16. For **leanness** substitute 'consumption.' The **fat ones**

---

[1] We have given here Peiser's text and rendering (some details of which, it must be confessed, are doubtful, though the general sense is clear), Schrader, *KIB.*, vol. i. We have somewhat similar language in Shamshi-Rammân's inscription (col. ii. 48 foll.), in which the royal conqueror compares himself to an eagle swooping on his prey.

[2] Winckler's edition of the Tell el Amarna inscriptions, transcribed in Schrader's *KIB.*, vol. v (viz. 55. 45–48, 60. 35, &c.; cf. with this expression Jer. v. 27).

among his fat ones leanness; and under his glory there
shall be kindled a burning like the burning of fire.
17 And the light of Israel shall be for a fire, and his Holy
One for a flame: and it shall burn and devour his thorns
18 and his briers in one day. And he shall consume the
glory of his forest, and of his fruitful field, both soul and
body: and it shall be as when a standardbearer fainteth.
19 And the remnant of the trees of his forest shall be few,
that a child may write them.
20 And it shall come to pass in that day, that the remnant

---

here referred to are, of course, the Assyrians who are to be overthrown by a Divine judgment.

17. The **light of Israel,** like the 'Holy One of Israel,' is a designation of Yahweh Himself. The image somewhat resembles that of Zech. xii. 6, cf. also Ps. xxvii. 1.

18. For **body** substitute the more accurate rendering 'flesh'; and for **standardbearer fainteth** read, with R. V. marg., 'as when a sick man pineth away.'

19. The glory of the woods as well as of the orchards is destroyed. Only a slight remnant of the forest trees remains. This desolation would be wrought by the hand of the invader. The prophet is probably thinking of the destruction of forest trees inflicted by the Assyrians themselves on conquered countries. The like punishment is to be meted out to Assyria. Respecting palm-groves Robertson Smith (*O. T. in Jewish Church*^{2}, p. 369) remarks that their destruction was a favourite exploit in Arabian warfare. The same was only too true of Assyrian. Thus Tiglath-Pileser III, in describing his operations against Chinzer (iii Rawl. 67. 23, 24), says: 'The plantations of palm which were close to his fortress I cut down, not a single one did I leave.' The policy recommended by Elisha to the Israelites in their war with Moab (2 Kings iii. 9) was to adopt this barbarous expedient, but the more advanced ethical spirit of the Book of Deuteronomy forbade it (Deut. xx. 18, 20). Moreover, it was the custom of the Assyrian kings to carry off valuable trees for home use, where they were either employed in buildings and internal decorations or planted in their parks. See the Prism inscription of Tiglath-Pileser I (1100 B.C.), col. vii. ll. 17-27; and art. 'Garden' in *Enc. Bibl.*

Verses 20-23. There are no sufficient grounds for denying the Isaianic authorship of these or of the preceding verses. Certainly there is no argument to be advanced on the ground of style, for of Israel, and they that are escaped of the house of Jacob, shall no more again stay upon him that smote them ; but shall stay upon the LORD, the Holy One of Israel, in

---

even Cheyne concedes that 'the whole passage is to a great extent a mosaic of Isaianic expressions and images' (*Introduction*, p. 52) ; and the candid confession of Duhm, in his introductory remarks to verses 5-34, is instructive as well as noteworthy : 'In separating what is genuine from the added interpolations a certain subjective process is, of course, inevitable.' On the other hand, it must be admitted that the connexion of this section with the preceding passage is a loose one, and that verses 24 foll. follow more naturally on verses 16-19 than on verses 20-23. But this is due to the character of the entire chapter, which is, like chap. iii and chap. v, a patchwork of Isaianic fragments united by a single dominating motive, the ultimate overthrow of proud Assyria, Yahweh's instrument of chastisement, and the restoration, moral and material, of the 'remnant of Israel.' The problem which confronts us here is analogous to that of Isa. ix. 1-7. Just as the sign and name Immanuel was not intended to be a vague illusive phantom, but a definite conception, so the name Sheār Yāshûbh ('Remnant shall return,' i.e. be converted and restored) needed an explicit declaration such as we find in verses 21, 22. This passage, again, belongs to the closing years of the prophet's life.

20. The editorial **And it shall come to pass in that day** introduces the passage as in viii. 18, 21 ; cf. iii. 18, iv. 2. The somewhat artificial link of connexion between this verse and the preceding is the word **remnant.** There are not infrequent examples of passages thus linked by word rather than thought, (e. g. xxviii. 5 foll. linked to preceding by the word 'crown' (cf. verse 1) ; Ps. ii linked with Ps. i in early times through the same word 'blessed' in Ps. i. 1 recurring at the close of Ps. ii ; Luke xiii. 34 foll. linked to verse 33 through recurrence of the word 'Jerusalem.' The true sequence is in Matt. xxiii.) The objection is raised by Cheyne that reliance upon Assyria (presupposed in verse 20) had no relevancy in the days of Ḥezeḳiah. But this is assuming too much. We know that there was an Egyptian party in Jerusalem, and that their policy was supported by Ḥezeḳiah ; but it is highly probable that there was an Assyrian party also, and that the policy which Aḥaz had followed, and thereby purchased safety for his kingdom amid the disasters which overwhelmed Ephraim, had many followers in the southern kingdom. It is not improbable that Ḥezeḳiah himself leaned to it in the days of Sargon, when the heavy hand of the latter was felt by Ashdod and other Philistine cities. Certainly the immunity of Judah would hardly have been explicable on any other hypo-

21 truth. A remnant shall return, *even* the remnant of
22 Jacob, unto the mighty God. For though thy people
Israel be as the sand of the sea, *only* a remnant of them
shall return: a consumption *is* determined, overflowing

---

thesis. It was the death of Sargon and the diversion created by Merodach-Baladan, as well as the recovery of Egypt in 708 under the new twenty-fifth or Ethiopian dynasty of Shabako, that created new factors and raised fresh hopes (see Introduction). The principle of dependence on Yahweh alone was the lesson taught by Hosea to Ephraim, and is the ever-recurring note of Isaiah's message to Aḥaz (see notes on chaps. vii and viii), and is implied in the watchword 'Immanuel.'

21. The language used by Isaiah in vii. 3 (Sheār Yāshûbh, 'Remnant shall return') and in ix. 6 ('Mighty God,' or Hero God) recurs here.

22. The metaphor of the **sand of the sea** in connexion with the great increase of the race of Israel recurs in O. T. literature (Gen. xxii. 17, xxxii. 13;[1] Hos. ii. 1). But here the increase is only supposed. If there be such an increase, only a remnant shall be converted to Yahweh. It is not easy to determine the precise limits of the expression **return** in the significant phrase, given by Isaiah as a prophetic sign as well as name to one of his sons. All are agreed that it means primarily 'shall return to Yahweh,' or be converted. Yet it is possible that it might even have a physical as well as moral sense. By this time the larger portion of Israel had been deported by the Assyrian conqueror to the East (721 B.C.), and even some of the inhabitants of the southern kingdom as well as the northern may have fled to Egypt. A diaspora already existed. Isaiah, like Amos, addressed oracles to the northern branch of the Hebrew race. Ephraim and Judah alike came under Yahweh's dispensations of discipline and grace. Subsequent prophets (notably Ezekiel) kept Ephraim as well as Judah within the circle of God's redemptive purposes. The question therefore arises whether the conception of the return from exile of a purified remnant of Israel could have come (as Orelli and the older exegetes thought) within the intellectual horizon of Isaiah? All recent critics are opposed to this extension of the significance of the Hebrew *Yāshûbh*. The remnant was to return to Yahweh, purely in the *moral* sense. It was Ezekiel who first explicitly prophesied the return from exile.

---

[1] Both passages belong to the document J, either in its earlier or its later stratum, i. e. are pre-exilian.

with righteousness. For a consummation, and that 23
determined, shall the Lord, the LORD of hosts, make in
the midst of all the earth.

Therefore thus saith the Lord, the LORD of hosts, O 24
my people that dwellest in Zion, be not afraid of the
Assyrian: though he smite thee with the rod, and lift up
his staff against thee, after the manner of Egypt. For 25
yet a very little while, and the indignation shall be
accomplished, and mine anger, in their destruction.
And the LORD of hosts shall stir up against him a scourge, 26

---

23. The **consumption** and **consummation** (renderings somewhat skilfully devised by R. V. to express the two closely allied words in the original) are to fall upon the whole world. In it Assyria is primarily involved; but Israel also comes within its scope. Its final purpose, expressed by the graphic phrase **overflowing with righteousness,** is the fulfilment of the Divine moral ideals in the government of the world. Cf. the language of xi. 9^b and lxvi. 12^a.

24 follows more naturally on verse 19; yet the connexion in thought with verse 23 is really not remote. The inhabitants of Zion are exhorted not to fear Assyria. The **manner of Egypt** is an allusion to the old days of the oppression (Exod. ii. 11, v. 5-19, &c.). Assyria is oppressing Israel now as Egypt did then.

25. The accomplishment of God's purpose of universal destruction (or 'consumption') will take place after a brief interval. An ingenious attempt has been made by several scholars (Luzatto, Grätz, &c.) to rearrange the Hebrew characters in the last clause of this verse, so that it would read: 'and my wrath upon the world will come to an end,' i. e. cease (cf. Deut. xxxi. 24, 30 for this use of the verb), but this contradicts the drift of the entire verse as well as the following. Accordingly Delitzsch would render the verb at the close of the reconstructed Heb. verse 'shall be fulfilled or accomplished.' By the 'world' we must naturally understand 'the whole earth' of verse 23, which to Isaiah could only mean Western Asia and Egypt. This would therefore denote chiefly the Assyrian Empire, which included most of Western Asia. On the other hand, if we rest satisfied with our Heb. text, reading *tablīthām* (or more probably, with some MSS., *taclīthām*), **their destruction,** the reference points more definitely to Assyria, mentioned in the preceding verse. This is in complete harmony with the following verses.

26. For the object of the Divine scourge (**against him**) is not

as in the slaughter of Midian at the rock of Oreb: and
his rod shall be over the sea, and he shall lift it up after
27 the manner of Egypt. And it shall come to pass in that
day, that his burden shall depart from off thy shoulder,
and his yoke from off thy neck, and the yoke shall be
destroyed because of the anointing.

---

the inhabited 'world,' which the proposed reading would lead us to assume, but Israel's oppressor Asshur mentioned in verse 24. The thought is the same as that of ix. 4 (3 Heb.).

With the expression 'stir up a scourge' cf. the expression 'lifted up his spear' in 2 Sam. xxiii. 18. The Heb. for **stir up** and 'lift up' in these two passages is the same verb. In connexion with Midian and the rock 'Oreb cf. Judges vii. 25; Ps. lxxxiii. 7–12. The name 'Oreb means 'raven' or 'crow' (cf. 1 Kings xvii. 46). According to Robertson Smith, these names of animals point to the existence of clans resembling those found among the Arabs, which believed that they were descended from animal ancestors. The animal ancestor or 'totem' was regarded as sacred, and the sacrifice of its life was hedged about with restrictions. See Robertson Smith, *Religion of the Semites*², p. 295, 'Kinship and marriage in Early Arabia,' chap. vii; Barton, *Semitic Origins*, pp. 34–8; Tylor's *Primitive Culture*, i. 402, ii. pp. 229–38.

27. The overthrow of Assyria meant relief to Judah from the galling yoke of Assyrian rule. From the days of Aḥaz till the close of the reign of Sargon the relation of Judah to the empire on the Tigris was probably one of vassalage, or closely approximating thereto. The last clause has been much discussed and amended. The rendering of R. V. marg. 'and the yoke shall be destroyed because of fatness' (i.e. Judah will throw off the yoke because she has become more full of vigour and prosperity) is far-fetched. The LXX render: 'And the yoke shall be destroyed from your shoulders,' which evidently points to a slight reconstruction of text. But it is an extremely weak ending, and a mere repetition of the first clause in slightly varied form. Under these circumstances it seems on the whole best to follow Duhm's reconstruction of the text, which takes away from this verse the last three words in the original and connects them with the following. Then by the alteration of the initial character of the verbal form that immediately precedes we get the rendering:—

'Then in that day shall his burden (viz. of Assyria) pass away
from upon thy shoulder,
And his yoke shall be destroyed from upon thy neck.

28. The last three Hebrew words are changed and connected with verse 28. Verses 28–32 were obviously composed

He is come to Aiath, he is passed through Migron; at 28
Michmash he layeth up his baggage: they are gone over 29
the pass; they have taken up their lodging at Geba:

---

several years after the preceding passages. We may assign them to the year 702–1, after Sennacherib had overthrown the persistent adversary of Assyrian power, Merodach-Baladan, and was directing his armies from the north against Judah and Philistia. The prophet forecasts his route of march, and vividly portrays the emotions of the inhabitants as each stage is reached by the invading hosts of the Assyrian conqueror. Render the restored text: 'He advances (*lit.* goes up) from Penê-Rimmôn, comes upon 'Ayyath, passes over to Migron, hands over his baggage to Michmash.'

Local considerations strongly favour the reading adopted by Duhm and reproduced in the above rendering. With the form *Penê-Rimmôn* ('face of Rimmôn,' or more properly Rammân) cf. the form *Penu* (or *Peni*) *ēl* (Gen. xxxii. 30; Judges viii. 8 foll.; 1 Kings xii. 25) and Penê-Baal (= Tanit) in Carthaginian inscriptions. The track may be easily followed by the reader who will consult a good modern map of Palestine. See Bädeker's map of Judaea in his *Palestine and Syria*. The spot here mentioned is to be identified with the 'rock of Rimmon' (Judges xx. 45, and see Moore's note) and with the present hill of *Rammûn* (Bädeker^2, p. 119), lying four English miles east of Bêtîn or Bethel, and three miles south of Eṭ-Ṭayibeh. The worship in Canaan of the god Rammân (Rimmôn), whose name was blended with that of the Syrian Adad (Hadad), is attested by the interesting passage Zech. xii. 11. *'Ayyath* is identified with the ancient Ai (Joshua vii. 2 foll.: cf. also 1 Chron. vii. 28; Neh. xi. 31), but its position is uncertain. *Migron* is probably the present *Makrûn*, lying south-east of the village Burḳa, a ruined spot north of Michmash (Dillmann, Kittel, Marti, *Enc. Bibl.*). *Michmash*, celebrated in the war between Saul and the Philistines (1 Sam. xiii. 2 foll.), is the present *Muchmâs*, a short distance north-east of Geba', and separated from it by the Wâdy Suwênîṭ. Here the enemy, according to the prophet's vivid forecast, is compelled to leave his baggage, for as Bädeker informs us, 'the sides of the Wâdy Suwênîṭ, the ancient pass of Michmash, are very steep, answering to their description in 1 Sam. xiv. 4, 13.'

29–32. The **pass** which they go through is, of course, the Wâdy Suwênîṭ above mentioned, which contracts to a rocky entrance only a few paces broad at the base of the valley. 'They have bivouacked as their night quarter at Geba'.' This is the most satisfactory rendering. Marti, however, follows Knobel, Delitzsch, Driver, and Duhm, as well as the Peshiṭto and Vulgate, in rendering

30 Ramah trembleth; Gibeah of Saul is fled. Cry aloud
with thy voice, O daughter of Gallim! hearken, O
31 Laishah! O thou poor Anathoth! Madmenah is a

---

the Hebrew ‘Gebaʻ has become our night quarter,’ and regarding these words as the exclamation of the foe. So R.V. marg., but this is certainly a forced interpretation. LXX renders from a different and apparently corrupted text. *Gebaʻ* is the present Jebaʻ (the old name in Arabic).

When the army of the invader has reached this point, the utmost alarm prevails in the neighbouring villages. Terror is naturally felt at the village of *Rāmah*, the modern *Er-Râm*, a height standing about two miles west of Jebaʻ. The excitement spreads to another height, *Gibeah of Saul*, identified by most commentators with Tell el Fûl, standing a little over four miles north-north-west of Jerusalem, nearly midway between that city and Gebaʻ. The inhabitants of this spot take to flight. *Gallim* and *Laishah* are evidently closely adjoining villages which cannot be identified. The next clause should be rendered with R.V. marg. ‘Answer her, ʻAnathoth,’ i. e. answer the cry of the **daughter of Gallim** (*Bath Gallim*). It is the rendering of Peshiṭto, and is followed by Lowth, Ewald, Cheyne, Duhm, &c., as well as R.V. marg. This is preferable to the other possible interpretations **thou poor Anathoth!** and ‘ʻAnathoth is bowed’ (in terror). ʻAnathoth is the modern ʻAnâta, about one mile south-east of Tell el Fûl, and a little more than three miles north-east of Jerusalem. It is celebrated as the birthplace of Jeremiah (Jer. i. 1), and the spot where his life was placed in great peril (xi. 21-23). It ‘seems to have been fortified in ancient times, and fragments of columns are built into the huts of the present village’ (Bädeker). ‘*Madmēnah* flits’ like a terrified bird. This is the meaning of the original (cf. Isa. xvi. 2; Jer. iv. 25; Ps. lv. 8; Prov. xxvii. 8 in the Heb.). ‘The inhabitants of *Gēbîm* seek flight.’ The word *Gēbîm* means ‘water-cisterns’ hollowed out of the rock (2 Kings iii. 16; Jer. xiv. 3). Neither this place nor Madmēnah can be identified. *Nōb* (which is also mentioned in 1 Sam. xxi; Neh. xi. 32) must have been situated in the immediate neighbourhood of Jerusalem, but its locality can no longer be fixed. Since the foe has advanced as far as Nob, he is in a position to threaten (‘shake his hand at’) Jerusalem itself. Our Hebrew text reads ‘house of Zion,’ but that expression is never employed, and the correction **daughter of Zion** in many versions and MSS. is rightly adopted here.

Marti considers that the ‘jingle’ of assonances that we find in these verses (28-32) is foreign to Isaiah's style. Yet he himself admits that Isaiah employed them on special occasions (e.g. chap.

fugitive; the inhabitants of Gebim gather themselves to flee. This very day shall he halt at Nob: he shaketh his hand 32 at the mount of the daughter of Zion, the hill of Jerusalem.

Behold, the Lord, the LORD of hosts, shall lop the 33 boughs with terror: and the high ones of stature shall be hewn down, and the lofty shall be brought low. And he 34 shall cut down the thickets of the forest with iron, and Lebanon shall fall by a mighty one.

---

v. 7, vi. 11, vii. 9). The vivid style is Isaiah's. We are reminded of chap. v. 26–30, vii. 18–20, viii. 7, 8, xxviii. 1–4. It is impossible to find any adequate historic occasion for the delivery of such an oracle in the reign of Sargon. Sargon's reference to 'the land *Ya-u-du* whose situation is remote' in the Nimrûd inscription, l. 8, is far too slender a basis on which to erect the hypothesis of an invasion of Judah. The mention of Hamath in the following line of the inscription renders it probable that here, as elsewhere, the land *Ya-u-du* is the country called *Yâdi* in the Senjirli inscriptions, in closer geographical connexion with Hamath than Judah, and lying in the distant north. We have had occasion to state that all the indications point to the conclusion that during the reign of Sargon Ḥezekiah followed the same policy as his father adopted, viz. that of vassalage to Assyria. Accordingly the only date that is possible for this oracle is 702–1. It is true that Sennacherib's armies in the campaign of 701, described with such detail in the Taylor cylinder, followed another and a more westerly route. But this is simply an illustration of the principle that it is only in the general contents and large outlines of prophecy that fulfilment is to be expected.

Verses 33 and 34 can hardly belong to the same date as 28–32, for they are not a continuation of the preceding oracle, in which the prevailing sentiment is one of panic. They either belong to a subsequent date, when the armies of Assyria had been withdrawn from Judah; or they originate in an earlier year, viz. 704–3, when the oracle, verses 5 foll., was composed. The conception in verses 33 foll. is the same as that of verses 17, 18.

33. Duhm renders 'lops off the crown of the tree with the *axe*,' but the alteration of the Hebrew word for **terror** (or, 'terrible might'; Cheyne 'crash') into another, meaning 'axe,' is arbitrary. So Marti, who compares Isaiah's own language in ii. 19, 21. Indeed, verses 12–21 show a striking parallel with the present passage. Translate: 'and its tallest branches shall be hewn down.'

34. Of course, the **mighty one** is Yahweh Himself, who brings about the overthrow of Assyria's pride.

11 And there shall come forth a shoot out of the stock of

CHAPTER XI.

Verses 1–9 form the close of another brief collection of oracles, beginning with the denunciation of doom through Assyria against Ephraim, ix. 8 foll., and followed by a prophecy of overthrow against proud Assyria itself. Again a beautiful Messianic passage brings the small group of oracles to an end. The glory of the Messiah's Kingdom of righteousness and peace is described. It cannot be said that the linguistic evidence against the genuineness of this poem is at all formidable, as it is presented in Cheyne's *Introduction.* The specialities of diction are those which might be expected in such a unique and highly exalted poem. It follows quite naturally on the prophecy of Assyria's overthrow. Kuenen remarks with perfect justice that there is no immediate connexion with the preceding section, and his further observation that there is absolute silence respecting the Assyrians, who are referred-to in the preceding x. 5–34 and in the Messianic passage ix. 4 (Heb. 3), may be admitted to be true, though an allusion to Assyria may lurk in the 'bear' and 'lion' of verse 7. For the further discussion on this subject see notes on ii. 2–4 and Isa. ix. 1–7 (at the close). Like those passages, the present Messianic poem was composed at the close of the prophet's life, after the withdrawal of Sennacherib's army in 701 B. C. It represents the utmost range of the prophetic vision, and the last scene of the eschatological drama that lay unfolded to his gaze. The judgment or 'day of the Lord' on Israel and on Assyria who oppressed him is past. We even hear no echo of the final overthrow of the Assyrian power by the Divine warrior-king of Isa. ix. 1–7. We see only the reign of righteousness and peace under Jesse's descendant. The hostile powers are at peace with their former foes. The strong and the weak live together in friendship and mutual trust.

Verses 1–2 deal with the personality of the Messianic ruler.

1. The 'stump' or **stock** of Jesse's family or Davidic ancestry seems to have been the phrase which led the editor of these poetic fragments to combine this poem with the preceding, where the destruction of the forests of Lebanon is portrayed. In contrast with this overthrow we have the **stock of Jesse** preserved and sending forth a living branch. On this conception of the 'branch or sprout of Yahweh' used by Jeremiah and Zechariah (Jer. xxiii. 5, xxxiii. 15; Zech. iii. 8, vi. 12) see note on Isa. iv. 2. There, however, the Hebrew phrase is different from that which is used here and is employed in a different sense. Here, as in Jeremiah and Zechariah, the reference is to a personal Davidic ruler (though in

Jesse, and a branch out of his roots shall bear fruit: and 2
the spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the spirit of
wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and
might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the
LORD; and his delight shall be in the fear of the LORD: 3
and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither

the case of Jeremiah the conception of a succession of rulers may also be involved[1]).

The expression 'stock' or 'trunk' is suggestive. The Hebrew original (cf. the corresponding Arabic root) means what remains after the branches and twigs have been lopped off. The 'house of David' is involved in the fiery trial that awaits Israel (cf. x. 12, 20, 22, 24). Yet it is not necessary to suppose that the line of David's descendants will altogether disappear and a second David arise, as Duhm supposes. The Davidic succession had persisted for three centuries in strange and awe-inspiring contrast to the many and violent changes of dynasty in the northern kingdom. In the days of Isaiah the belief in the perpetuation of the line (cf. Jer. xxxiii. 17; 2 Sam. vii. 16; 1 Kings ii. 4) had already taken root.

2. The conception of the 'spirit of Yahweh' is here no narrow one. It assumes varied forms to meet the varied duties and relations of life to be sustained by the Messianic ruler. It begins with 'wisdom,' and the recital closes with 'religion' or the 'fear of Yahweh' which is the beginning or fundamental principle of wisdom (Prov. ix. 10; Ps. cxi. 10: cf. Prov. i. 7). We see therefore that there are diversities of gifts involved in the possession of this one spirit of God (1 Cor. xii. 4 foll.). Among these gifts we note that the characteristics of the 'Wondrous Counsellor,' and the 'Warrior-hero,' ix. 6 (5 Heb.), viz. 'counsel' and 'might,' are included.

3. The expression **his delight shall be in the fear of the LORD** has occasioned some difficulty. Duhm regards it as a variant or gloss, and rejects it from the text. The original Hebrew properly means 'his smelling' or 'scenting with satisfaction,' and hence 'taking pleasure in,' used especially of Yahweh taking pleasure in and so accepting sacrifice or sacrificial ceremonial (cf. 1 Sam. xxvi. 19; Amos v. 21), but here the Hebrew original hardly gives a good sense. The LXX by their rendering indicate

---

[1] Jer. xxxiii. 15-17 are regarded by Cornill and other critics as a later addition. Probably this extension of the personal Messianic idea into a succession of rulers came later.

4 reprove after the hearing of his ears: but with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall
5 he slay the wicked. And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins.
6 And the wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead

---

a more probable reading, and we might with good reason adopt this and render 'and He (i. e. God) will cause the fear of Yahweh to rest on him.'

The following words (verses 3–5) describe the character of the Messiah-King's rule. It is to be characterized by justice to the weak and suffering, and stern chastisement of the wicked. For **reprove** read with R. V. (marg.) 'decide'; so also in verse 4.

4. For **poor** in the first clause render with Cheyne 'helpless.' The following clause should then be translated: 'and will give decision in equity for the lowly one of the land.' Some scholars, as Duhm, Cheyne, and Marti, consider that **earth** in the next clause is due to a corruption of the original text, which should be corrected to a more significant word which they would substitute. They would accordingly render: 'And will smite the *tyrant* (or, violent one) with the rod of his mouth.' The parallelism of the last two clauses is thereby rendered more complete. On the other hand, the LXX and other versions lend no support to this emendation.

5. This symbolic use of **girdle** is characteristic of the O.T., which often employs the metaphor of clothing to express the possession of spiritual qualities: 'garments of praise' (Isa. lxi. 3), 'robe of righteousness' (ibid. verse 10: cf. Job xxix. 14). In the second parallel clause 'faithfulness' or truth takes the place of 'righteousness' in the first. Cf. Eph. vi. 14.

In verses **6–9** the consequences of the rule of the Messianic Prince are portrayed in the form of an idyllic picture of a paradise of peace. The wolf that now preys upon the lamb shall then enter into relations of friendship with the latter. Both become fellow sojourners and guests in the same peaceful household. This conception of mutual amity is worked out with other beasts of prey and tame cattle. Note the obvious borrowing in lxv. 25.

The latter part of verse 6 is doubtful. The LXX render: 'And calf and bull and lion shall feed together.' This is not improbably

them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young 7
ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw
like the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole 8
of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the
basilisk's den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my 9
holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge
of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea.

[**Ex.**] And it shall come to pass in that day, that the 10
root of Jesse, which standeth for an ensign of the peoples,

---

the embodiment of a conflate reading combining two variants, one of which read 'bull' and the other 'calf.' Probably the true reading was: 'And calf and young lion shall feed together.' The young lad who leads them has no fear of the lion which, as we learn subsequently, ceases to be carnivorous.

Verse **9** is the natural conclusion to the poem; it contains nothing out of harmony with verse 4 (as Duhm supposes), where the policy of the just Messianic ruler is described as tending to the suppression of all wrongdoing. In consequence of this the violent are disciplined to gentleness, and wrongdoing disappears throughout 'God's holy mountain.' See note on xiii. 20.

Verses 10-16 are rightly connected together by most commentators, including Kittel and Marti, and portray a further series of results of the ideal or Messianic rule. But the conceptions are later and are evidently an extension of the ideas expressed in the preceding Isaianic prophecy as well as of those which underlie ii. 2-4. These are worked out in detail. Doubtless a diaspora existed of Hebrews belonging to both the northern and southern kingdoms even in the days of Isaiah; many of these found their way to Egypt as well as Assyria (cf. Hos. ix. 3, 6). Verse 12 reminds us of Isa. xlix. 22, while the earlier part of verse 15 reminds us of Isa. l. 2 (latter part). In other words, we are in verses 10 foll. transplanted into the days of the Exile (or into those which immediately followed), and are hearing Deutero-Isaianic echoes. Yet the language is that of a student of Isaiah's genuine oracles, and the Hebrew words for 'remnant,' 'seek unto,' 'ensign,' 'highway,' 'shake his hand' are expressions used by the eighth-century prophet. On the other hand, 'coastlands (islands) of the sea,' 'outcasts of Israel,' 'corners of the earth' are not phrases employed by Isaiah. Cf. Ezek. vii. 2; Job xxxvii. 3.

10. The **root** of Jesse here takes the place of the 'stock' (or 'trunk') of verse 1, and must be understood not in the literal and original sense which the word bears ('roots') in verse 1, but unto him shall the nations seek; and his resting place shall be glorious.

11 And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall set his hand again the second time to recover the remnant of his people, which shall remain, from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from

with the extended meaning of 'sapling' or 'sprout' as in liii. 2. The conception of this verse is not unlike that of iv. 2, 5.

11. The LXX by their rendering suggest that **second time** (*shēnîth*) is an unnecessary addition which has crept into the Hebrew Massoretic text, since their translation contains no equivalent. It is probably due to the corruption of another word (*s'ēth*) which stood in its place in the original text, and which a full construction requires. Render: 'will again raise his hand to win the remnant of his people.' Marti thinks that the prophet refers to a second ingathering of exiles after the first return had taken place in the days of Zerubbabel and Ezra. He does not distinguish between the return under Zerubbabel from that under Ezra. Both are blended in one, and are regarded as one past event by the prophet, who eagerly anticipates another return of yet further bands of exiles. This is, of course, a possible view if the passage is to be placed so late. But there is a more probable explanation. When the writer uses the expression **again**, he is looking back to a much more distant event than that which occurred in 536 B. C. and the following years. He is thinking of the great event stamped on the memory of Israel from the earliest times, viz. the deliverance from Egypt to which verse 16 alludes. The reference to this central fact of Israel's history constantly recurs in O. T. literature.

Pathros represents Upper Egypt, while **Cush** represents Ethiopia (*Nubia*), (Gen. x. 6, 14). *Shin'ar* is a generic term for Babylonia[1]. All these latter names Duhm regards as a mere enumeration added later by some scribe to the text. **Elam**, in Babylonian *Elamtu* or Susiana, called also *Anzan*, the kingdom first ruled by Cyrus.

---

[1] The identification of this Hebrew proper name *Shin'ar* with the Babylonian name, appearing in the cuneiform, *Shum'er*, adopted formerly by many scholars, including Schrader (*COT.*, i. p. 103 foll.), is now given up by leading Assyriologists. That *Shin'ar* designated Babylonia is clear from Gen. xi. 1-9: cf. x. 10.

the islands of the sea. And he shall set up an ensign for 12
the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and
gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four
corners of the earth. The envy also of Ephraim shall 13
depart, and they that vex Judah shall be cut off: Ephraim
shall not envy Judah, and Judah shall not vex Ephraim.
And they shall fly down upon the shoulder of the Philis- 14
tines on the west; together shall they spoil the children
of the east: they shall put forth their hand upon Edom
and Moab; and the children of Ammon shall obey them.

---

12. In v. 26 the banner is raised to rally foreign peoples *against* Ephraim. Here both foreign peoples and the exiles of Israel (including Ephraim, verse 13) are to be rallied under Yahweh's uplifted standard.

13. The 'envy (or jealousy) of Ephraim' should be interpreted in accordance with the concluding clauses of this verse. Evidently the jealous rivalry felt by the southern kingdom for Ephraim is meant, and not the hostility of *foreign nations* against Ephraim (as Marti interprets the phrase). If modern critics (including Marti himself) are correct in assigning these verses to the exilian or post-exilian period, the hostility of foreign nations towards Ephraim must have long ago ceased to count as a real factor in the historic situation. On the other hand, the mutual jealousy of Samaria and Jerusalem was painfully evident in the early post-exilian times.

The 'oppressors of Judah' may have included Ephraimites; but probably other and foreign peoples are likewise meant: cf. Neh. ii. 10, 19.

14. The **shoulder** of the Philistines is a term descriptive of the physical configuration of the mountainous central region of Southern Palestine as it slopes down to the coast-land occupied by the Philistine people. Similarly the proper name *Shechem* signifies a ridge, properly 'neck.'

In contrast with the Philistines on the west (*lit.* in Hebrew 'seawards') we have the 'sons of the east,' predatory nomadic Arabian tribes of the desert lying on the eastern side of Palestine, perhaps descendants of the Midianites and Amalekites of the early pre-exilian times of the judges. To identify these with the Arabs ruled by Aretas and subdued by Alexander Jannaeus about 100 B. C. would be an extravagant hypothesis, though supported by Duhm and Marti. It is exceedingly improbable that any passage in the Hebrew prophets can be assigned to so late

15 And the LORD shall utterly destroy the tongue of the
Egyptian sea; and with his scorching wind shall he shake
his hand over the River, and shall smite it into seven
16 streams, and cause men to march over dryshod. And
there shall be an high way for the remnant of his people,
which shall remain, from Assyria; like as there was for
Israel in the day that he came up out of the land of
Egypt.

---

a period. It must be confessed that our knowledge of the earlier post-exilian Hebrew history after 536 B.C. is exceedingly defective, and historic identifications are therefore very precarious.

The predatory nomads are to be plundered in their turn by Israel the restored nation. Similarly Edom and Moab, Israel's bitter foes at various periods of pre-exilian history (Num. xx. 14–21, xxi. 4; 1 Sam. xiv. 47; 2 Sam. viii. 13 foll.; 2 Kings viii. 20–22, xiv. 7: cf. Lam. iv. 21 foll.; Ezek. xxxv. 3–15; Obad. 10–16; Isa. xxxiv and lxiii. 1–6 with reference to Edom; 2 Kings iii and xi, xiii. 20, Amos i. 13 in reference to Moab).

'The Ammonites shall obey them.' In the original we have the abstract used in place of the personal and concrete: 'shall be their obedience,' i. e. subjects to them. Their hostility to Israel in early pre-exilian times is testified by Deut. xxiii. 4; Judges x. 6—xii. 7; 1 Sam. xi; 2 Sam. xi. 1. These three peoples, Edom, Moab, and Ammon, were closely kindred to Israel, as the patriarchal narratives and genealogies in Genesis clearly prove. The language of the Moabite Stone exhibits only slight dialectic divergence from Hebrew, and its religious ideas manifest the closest analogies to those of ancient Israel. Cf. Wellhausen in *Enc. Bibl.* vol. iii. 'Moab.'

15. shall utterly destroy the tongue of the Egyptian sea. The Hebrew properly signifies 'shall place under a ban' or 'devote to destruction,' a term frequently employed in the Book of Joshua of the Canaanite cities and their inhabitants and property. But the expression does not apply so suitably to the bay of a sea. Accordingly we had best follow the reading of the Hebrew, which is the basis of the rendering of the LXX and other versions. This involves a very slight deviation from the Massoretic text, and is much more appropriate. Read: 'And he will *dry up* the tongue,' &c. The thought of the prophet reverts to the story of the Exodus; cf. xxxvii. 25, l. 2.

scorching wind or 'glowing wind' is the interpretation given by Saadia of the doubtful Massoretic Hebrew text. The rendering of the LXX, Vulg., and Syr. 'violent wind' (see marg. of R. V.)

[**P E.**] And in that day thou shalt say, I will give thanks 12
unto thee, O Lord; for though thou wast angry with me,
thine anger is turned away, and thou comfortest me.
Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and will not be 2
afraid: for the Lord JEHOVAH is my strength and song;
and he is become my salvation. Therefore with joy shall 3
ye draw water out of the wells of salvation. And in that 4
day shall ye say, Give thanks unto the Lord, call upon
his name, declare his doings among the peoples, make

---

is on the whole more probable, because based on a more likely text than our own. The latter contains a ἀπ. λεγ. which appears to be due to the corruption of a well-known Hebrew word.

Chapter XII.

This chapter contains an epilogue which worthily closes the brief Isaianic collection, chaps. i–xii, and follows naturally on the preceding prophecy of Israel's restoration, and like these verses (xi. 10–16) belongs to the late exilian or early post-exilian period. The fact that it belongs to a later period than Isaiah's lifetime has been recognized by most exegetes since Ewald. Duhm's analysis shows that the chapter contains *two brief songs of thanksgiving*.

(1) **1–2.** After a short prosaic introduction we have a song of two verses or strophes, each containing four short lines:—

'I praise Thee, Yahweh;
For Thou wast angered against me,
And Thy wrath hath turned back [contrast ix. 12, &c.],
And Thou comfortest me.'

In the third line of this first strophe we have followed Cheyne in making a slight emendation. The next strophe breaks forth in confident exultation:—

'Behold, my saving God;
I trust, and feel no dread.'

(2) **3–6.** The second song of thanksgiving, like the first, has a brief prosaic introduction, but it is poetic in conception and contains a beautiful image (verse 3). In Jer. ii. 13 we have the real clue to the interpretation of the phrase 'wells of deliverance' or victory. God, 'the spring of living waters' (with Jer. ii. 13 cf. John iv. 14), is the source from which the people will exultantly draw (cf. Ps. lxxxvii. 7). We notice that whereas in the introduction to the first thanksgiving song we have the singular,

5 mention that his name is exalted. Sing unto the LORD; for he hath done excellent things: let this be known in all 6 the earth. Cry aloud and shout, thou inhabitant of Zion: for great is the Holy One of Israel in the midst of thee.

13 [**R**] The burden of Babylon, which Isaiah the son of Amoz did see.

---

we here have the plural. After this short prelude in verse 3, we have in verses 4–6 two strophes of three and four lines respectively, but the lines are longer than in the preceding song:—

> 'Praise Yahweh, call upon His name,
> Make known among the peoples His exploits,
> Make mention that His name is exalted.
>
> Chant Yahweh's praise, that He hath done splendid deeds:
> Let this be proclaimed o'er all the earth.
> Exult and shout aloud, inhabitants of Zion:
> That great is Israel's Holy One in thy midst.'

Poetic passages of this kind are not in the style of the great prophet of the eighth century. We are reminded of the Psalms, especially Ps. cv. 1, cxlviii. 1; Exod. xv. 1, 2; and Isa. xxv. 9, xxvi. 1, xxvii. 2 (all belonging to a very late section xxiv–xxvii).

CHAPTERS XIII—XXIII. ORACLES ON FOREIGN NATIONS.

CHAPTER XIII—XIV. 23.

We now enter upon another collection. It extends from chap. xiii to chap. xxiii, and consists of a series of 'utterances' or 'oracles' directed against foreign nations, and dealing with the destiny and doom of each in succession. The series begins with an utterance against Babylonia and her king. It falls into two parts: xiii. 2–22, which describes the overthrow of Babylon, and xiv. 4^b–21, which portrays the descent of Babylon's monarch to the Lower World in a passage remarkable for the beauty of stately, weird pomp. Both portions probably came from the same author. So also verses 22, 23 which, however, seem to attach themselves more readily to the first part than to the second, since they deal with Babylon rather than Babylon's king. Between the two portions there is interpolated in xiv. 1–4^a a prosaic passage of far inferior character, altogether out of keeping with the rest of the poem, both before and after. The poem is composed in strophes of seven long lines each, or of fourteen verses if we regard each line as consisting of a longer and a shorter verse. This is the characteristic form of the Ḳinah measure or elegiac

[**Ex.**] Set ye up an ensign upon the bare mountain, lift up 2

---

metre employed in the stately funereal odes which occur, for example, in Lamentations (especially note chap. iii) and in Ezek. xix. See Budde, article 'Poetry' in Hastings' *DB.*, and his famous and epoch-making essay on 'The Hebrew Dirge' in *ZATW.*, 1882, pp. 1–52. As an example, we cite the opening lines of Lamentations:—

'Ah! how the city sitteth alone, once great in people!
She hath become like a widow great among nations!
A princess erewhile among the provinces hath become the menial.'

According to Budde, the normal metric length of the longer verse in proportion to the shorter, which follows it, is 3 : 2[1].

First Strophe (verses 1–4). *Mustering of the nations who are to advance against Babylon.* The word here rendered 'burden' is correctly translated 'utterance' or 'oracle.' The word is here employed by the editor of this collection of Isaianic and later oracles, and it meets us again in Jer. xxiii. 33 foll.; Ezek. xii. 10. The word is employed in these redactorial headings throughout this collection of oracles against foreign nations, and it also recurs in xxx. 6. Outside Isaiah it is frequently employed in a similar manner at the opening of prophetic sections: Nah. i. 1; Hab. i. 1; Zech. ix. 1, xii. 1; and Mal. i. 1.

It was Amos, the prophet of Yahweh's universal sovereignty and justice, who was probably the first to deliver oracles denouncing doom against foreign nations (i. 3—ii. 16). His example was followed by Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel, in oracles of greater length than the brief utterances of Amos.

It is quite certain from many internal indications that this oracle was not composed by Isaiah. Assyria, and not Babylonia, was the empire which was in the ascendant during the prophet's lifetime. Merodach-Baladan (in Assyrian Marduk-abal-iddin) was the ruler of Babylon at the close of the eighth century, and had to maintain a desperate struggle with varying fortunes for realm and life against successive occupants of the throne of Nineveh. It is quite clear that Babylonia and its monarch did not fill the high place in the political drama which the present oracle assigns to them. We have to advance considerably more than a century after the close of Isaiah's life before we reach the historic conditions which are in accord with those of the present chapter. Babylonia had then succeeded to the proud position once held by Assyria.

---

[1] Modern Arabic poetry has similar metres; see Littmann's *Neuarabische Volkspoesie*, p. 90: cf. p. 47, 14–17. See Addenda, p. 369.

the voice unto them, wave the hand, that they may go into
3 the gates of the nobles. I have commanded my consecrated ones, yea, I have called my mighty men for mine anger,
4 even my proudly exulting ones. The noise of a multitude in the mountains, like as of a great people! the noise of a tumult of the kingdoms of the nations gathered together!

The linguistic features of these oracles clearly point to an authorship later than the age of Isaiah, though there are evident reminiscences of Isaianic phraseology to be found in it in considerable number, combined with expressions that are non-Isaianic and later. A list of these may be found in Dillmann's commentary (ed. Kittel, 1898), p. 125.

We should probably not be far wrong in assigning to the section xiii—xiv. 23 the date 550 B.C. (about).

The whole of the first verse is editorial. We are reminded of i. 1.

2. 'On the bare mountain hoist the ensign, lift up the voice to them,
Wave the hand, that they come into the gates of nobles.'

These words are spoken by the prophet. The standard is to be lifted and the proclamation made to the enemies of Babylon. The nobles here referred-to are the Babylonians, who regarded themselves as supreme in Western Asia. The expression 'gates of the nobles' is held by Duhm to be an allusion to Babylon (Babel), which in the original Babylonian language of the cuneiform was *Bâb-ilu*, or 'God's gateway.'

3. The construction of this verse is difficult. Duhm and Cheyne would place the Hebrew word for **for mine anger** earlier in the verse, and the former would then translate: 'I have summoned unto [the execution of] my wrath, my consecrated, my proudly exulting ones,' thereby improving metre and structure. As in Zeph. i. 7, the 'day of the Lord' is regarded as a festival. Here it is a battle-festival, and the 'consecrated ones' are Yahweh's warrior host. On war as a sacred act, in which Yahweh, the leader who goes before the host[1], participates, cf. Exod. xv. 3, xvii. 16; 2 Sam. xi. 11; Deut. xxiii. 10 foll. and article 'War' in *Enc. Bibl.* But the armies here mustered together are those of many foreign peoples (verse 4).

4. Render: 'A loud uproar in the mountains.' The mountains are those of Media, lying east of Babylonia. This was the quarter

---

[1] Similarly Nergal goes before Shalmaneser II (*âlik paniya*, Monolith inscription, col. ii. 96): cf. Exod. xiii. 21.

the LORD of hosts mustereth the host for the battle. They 5
come from a far country, from the uttermost part of heaven,
even the LORD, and the weapons of his indignation, to
destroy the whole land. Howl ye; for the day of the 6
LORD is at hand; as destruction from the Almighty shall

---

from which the Medo-Persian foes of Babylonia, under the banner of Cyrus, attacked the empire of Nabonidus and brought about its overthrow in 538-6 B. C.

Second Strophe (verses 5-8). *Terror and dismay caused by the advancing hosts.* Duhm remarks that the range of vision of this exilian or post-exilian poet is wider than that of Isaiah at the close of the eighth century. This passage abounds in parallels with Joel and Jeremiah.

With verse 4 'uproar' (noise) cf. Joel iii. (Heb. iv.) 14 'uproars' (R. V. 'multitudes').

With verse 6 ('howl') cf. Joel i. 5, 11.

With verse 6 ('nigh is the day of Yahweh; as destructive might of the mighty one') cf. Joel i. 15 entire, and iv. 14, also Jer. l. 27.

With verse 8 cf. Joel ii. 6.

With verses 10, 13 cf. Joel ii. 10^{b}.

Opinions are much divided as to the original source of these phrases. Duhm, for example, thinks that the sentence in verse 6 may be removed, without affecting the context, more easily from the present passage than from Joel. This is, however, doubtful. The passage seems to be more appropriate in its Isaianic context than in Joel. Moreover, it is notorious that Joel's prophecies exhibit clear traces of borrowings (see Driver's *LOT.*^{6}, p. 312), and are held by most critics to be post-exilian. Similarly Jer. l is a later addendum (see Cornill's text in *SBOT.*), and verse 27 is an echo of verse 6 in our chapter.

6. destruction from the Almighty (in Heb. *Shaddai*) does not express the assonance of the original (*shōd, shaddai*). We might render: 'as the destructive might of the Almighty.' But it has been doubted whether there is really any etymological connexion between the two words, as many scholars formerly supposed. For the various derivations which have been proposed see *Enc. Bibl.* under 'Shaddai,' and Hastings' *DB.* under 'God,' vol. ii. p. 199. None of these can be pronounced satisfactory. We might either follow Delitzsch and connect the word with *shadû* or *shaddû* in Assyrian, meaning 'mountain,' a term applied to the Deity metaphorically in proper names (cf. Schrader, *COT.*, vol. ii. p. 326), or recur to the old explanation and connect it (as in this verse) with the Hebrew root *shādad,* meaning to 'destroy.' This seems to fit in with Num. xxiv. 4, 16, where He

7 it come. Therefore shall all hands be feeble, and every
8 heart of man shall melt: and they shall be dismayed;
pangs and sorrows shall take hold *of them*; they shall be
in pain as a woman in travail: they shall be amazed one
9 at another; their faces *shall be* faces of flame. Behold,
the day of the LORD cometh, cruel, with wrath and fierce
anger; to make the land a desolation, and to destroy the
10 sinners thereof out of it. For the stars of heaven and
the constellations thereof shall not give their light: the
sun shall be darkened in his going forth, and the moon
11 shall not cause her light to shine. And I will punish the

---

is the God 'who compels a foreign soothsayer to bless Israel, and will make Israel victorious over his foes.' See Cheyne in *Enc. Bibl.* under 'Shaddai.' This writer in *Expositor*, January, 1904, holds that the Israelites worshipped their supreme God under the name Yahweh (or Yahu), after they became the guests of the Kenites: 'The name under which they had formerly worshipped the supreme God was, according to tradition, *Ēl Shaddai*.' The historic value of the tradition it is hardly possible to determine. See Driver's *Book of Genesis*, pp. 404 foll. (Methuen).

7. The Ḳinah measure fails in this verse. The shorter member that follows the longer is lost. We have only the longer member preserved:—

> 'Therefore all hands become slack . . .
> And every heart of man melts,—(verse 8) and is filled with consternation.'

> **8.** 'Spasms and agonies seize [them]; as a woman that brings forth, they writhe.
> One stares in amaze at his fellow; flaming faces are their faces.'

Third Strophe (verses 9-12). *The destruction wrought by Yahweh.*

9. Translate more idiomatically: 'making the land a desolation, destroying sinners from off it.'

10. the constellations thereof: better rendered 'their Orions'; cf. Amos v. 8.

his going forth is the Hebrew way of saying 'its rising.' The sun was personalized as a male deity by the ancient Semites (e.g. Babylonians and Canaanites), as by the ancient Greeks. In ancient Teutonic mythology it is feminine, while the moon is masculine. The moon was also male in Canaanite and Babylonian cults. Such personalization, however, is not apparent here.

world for *their* evil, and the wicked for their iniquity;
and I will cause the arrogancy of the proud to cease, and
will lay low the haughtiness of the terrible. I will make 12
a man more rare than fine gold, even a man than the pure
gold of Ophir. Therefore I will make the heavens to 13
tremble, and the earth shall be shaken out of her place,
in the wrath of the LORD of hosts, and in the day of his
fierce anger. And it shall come to pass, that as the chased 14
roe, and as sheep that no man gathereth, they shall turn
every man to his own people, and shall flee every man to
his own land. Every one that is found shall be thrust 15
through; and every one that is taken shall fall by the sword.
Their infants also shall be dashed in pieces before their 16
eyes; their houses shall be spoiled, and their wives

11. the terrible: more correctly 'the violent,' or perhaps 'the tyrants' (Ps. xxxvii. 35).

12. The destruction of human life will be so great that human beings are regarded as precious rarities. *Ophir* (cf. Gen. x. 29) is probably to be sought on the south coast of Arabia. Formerly an attempt was made to identify it with a certain portion of the Malabar coast of India, near to Goa[1]; but this is geographically too remote to be probable.

Fourth Strophe (verses 13–16). *Terrible fate of the fugitives from Babylon.*

13. It is doubtful whether the utterance of Yahweh is continued beyond the preceding strophe. It would be well, therefore, to adopt the reading suggested by the LXX, and not adhere to the Hebrew text on which R. V. rests. Therefore for 'I will make the heavens tremble' read 'The heavens shall tremble.'

14. For **roe** read with R. V. marg. 'gazelle,' the same word as that which occurs in the opening of David's elegy over Saul and Jonathan (2 Sam. i. 19, similarly rendered in R.V. marg.).

---

[1] The export of sandalwood (1 Kings ix. 28, x. 11) from Ophir gave some colour to this theory of Bochart and Reland and, since heir day, of the late Bishop Caldwell of Tinnevelly. Canon Driver is nclined to favour its identification with either the mouth of the ndus or some port east or south-east of Arabia (*Book of Genesis*, p. 131, footnote 4).

17 ravished. Behold, I will stir up the Medes against them, which shall not regard silver, and as for gold, they shall

Fifth Strophe (verses 17–19). *Destruction wrought on Babylon by the Medes.* The brevity of this strophe is due to serious mutilation, especially in verses 17, 18, portions of which are lost.

The Medes in reality divided with the Babylonians the heritage of Assyria. Nabopolassar in his struggle with Assyria was supported by the Medes. Nineveh was captured by their aid. During the reign of the greatest Babylonian monarch of the new empire, Nebuchadnezzar, there was peace and harmony between the Babylonians and the Medes. The reason for this close bond of union between Media and Babylonia is not far to seek. It was due to political exigencies. Babylonia was secure only as long as she remained in friendship with her energetic and restless Indo-Germanic neighbour. For recent investigations make it clear that since the ninth century Indo-Germanic races were pouring into Asia Minor, and that the Medians (in the latter part of the seventh century and the earlier part of the sixth) were certainly Indo-Germanic. In the reign of the last Babylonian king, Nabonidus (Nabû-nâ'id), the race ruled by the Median king Astyages (Ištuvi(mi)gu) was called Umman-manda (see cylinder from Abu-Habba, col. i. l. 32), a term which Fried. Delitzsch in his Assyrian Dictionary interprets as meaning 'a horde of peoples.' These hordes would be mainly Scythians, who came swooping down upon Media in the days of Cyaxares the predecessor of Astyages. These barbaric hordes, as we learn from the Abu-Habba cylinder, were easily dispersed by Cyrus king of Anzân (col. i. ll. 29 foll.)[1], who thus obtained possession of the whole of Media. This conquest we may place about 553 B. C. The term Anzân or Anshân included Media as well as Elam. It is true that Cyrus is also called (in the Chronicle of Nabonidus and Cyrus) 'king of the land Parsu' or Persia; but Persia in those days was only a portion of Media independent of Astyages. Cyrus was better known as king of Anzân or Media, and it was with the hosts of Media, probably of varied races—but chiefly Indo-Germanic—that Cyrus conquered Babylon in 539–8 B.C. The Persians were likewise Indo-Germanic, and for a long time to come the name of the Persians, to whom Cyrus belonged, was overshadowed by that of the Medes. This is especially true in the case of Greek writers.

---

[1] Schrader, *Keilinschriftliche Bibliothek*, vol. iii. pt. ii. p. 98. The capture of Babylon is described in the Cyrus cylinder, transcribed and translated by Schrader in the *Keilinsch. Bibl.*, *ibid.*, p. 120 foll., and also by Hagen in Delitzsch and Haupt's *Beiträge zur Assyriol.*, vol. ii. heft i. p. 208 foll.

not delight in it. And *their* bows shall dash the young 18
men in pieces; and they shall have no pity on the fruit of
the womb; their eye shall not spare children. And 19
Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldeans' pride, shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and
Gomorrah. It shall never be inhabited, neither shall it 20
be dwelt in from generation to generation: neither shall
the Arabian pitch tent there; neither shall shepherds

In Dan. vi. 8, 12; Esther i. 29, Medes and Persians are combined. See Sayce's article in Hastings' *DB.* 'Media,' and also Winckler's remarks in *KAT.*^{3}, p. 100 foll. Especially clear and instructive is the article 'Medien' by Alfred Jeremias in *PRE.*^{3}.

17. Duhm thinks that the word *Elam* has fallen out of the text after **Medes** (Media). It is more probable that it fell out *before* the word 'Medes,' owing to its resemblance to the preceding word in the original *'alêhem* ('against them'). But even with this addition, it is doubtful whether we have a complete verse. The expression 'regard not silver, and take no pleasure in gold' may refer to the inexorable character of the destruction which will be wrought in Babylon. Treasures of art, however costly, will not be spared. Or it may refer to the implacable character of the Median soldiery, who cannot be bought off by silver or gold.

18. Probably Duhm is right in holding that we have at the beginning of this verse only fragments of two lost verses. Jer. l and li contain echoes of this beautiful poem. With the aid of Jer. li. 22 Marti conjecturally restores the second line: 'And all young men they will dash in pieces, and maidens shall be beaten to death.' The first line evidently has only one word 'bows.' As the present Hebrew text stands, rendered in the R.V. 'And bows dash their young men in pieces,' we have an unintelligible statement. It is only clubs or iron maces (the *shébhet* of Ps. ii. 8) or the hammer of Jer. li. 20 that could accomplish such brutal work.

19. Babylon, 'the proud splendour of the Chaldeans,' shall suffer overthrow at God's hand like Sodom and Gomorrah. These cities of the Dead Sea were the constantly chosen examples employed in prophetic warning. 'Like Sodom and Gomorrah' became a proverb: cf. Isa. i. 9.

Sixth Strophe (verses 20–22). *Babylon becomes a ruined and lonely spot, demon-haunted.*

20. Once more we meet with echoes of this poem in Jer. l. 39, 40. The wandering nomad or Arab Bedâwî shuns the spot haunted by animal-demon shapes or *jinn* (as the Arabs call them).

21 make their flocks to lie down there. But wild beasts of the desert shall lie there; and their houses shall be full of doleful creatures; and ostriches shall dwell there, and
22 satyrs shall dance there. And wolves shall cry in their castles, and jackals in the pleasant palaces: and her time is near to come, and her days shall not be prolonged.
14 [R] For the Lord will have compassion on Jacob, and will

'In fact the earth may be said to be parcelled out between demons and wild beasts on the one hand, and gods and men on the other. To the former belong the untrodden wilderness with all its unknown perils, the wastes and jungles that lie outside the familiar tracks and pasture-grounds of the tribe, and which only the boldest men venture upon without terror; to the latter belong the regions that man knows and habitually frequents' (W. R. Smith, *Rel. of the Semites*², p. 121). To the latter category belongs all God's holy mountain, in fact the whole earth in the ideal future contemplated in Isa. xi. 1-9. See article 'Demon' in Hastings' *DB.*, vol. i. pp. 590-1, and 'Magic' ibid. vol. ii. p. 208 (right-hand col.).

21. By the **wild beasts of the desert** we should probably understand '*wild cats*,' which the Arabs call by almost the same name as we find here in the Hebrew. The **doleful creatures** or howlers may mean 'jackals,' though this is far from certain. The Hebrew word for the goat-shaped satyr probably means 'hairy one.' Wellhausen in his *Reste des Arabischen Heidentums*² (*Remains of Arabic Heathendom*), pp. 149, 151 foll., compares the *'Ifrît* of the Ḳorân and *The Thousand and One Nights*. But it is doubtful whether his etymology of the Arabic word is the real one; see article 'Demon' in Hastings' *DB.*, p. 590, footnote.

22. The word rendered **wolves** should be translated 'jackals' (perhaps hyaenas). The word rendered **jackals** in the following clause in R. V. should probably be rendered 'wolves.' These howl as the satyrs dance in the ruined palatial halls[1] where the Babylonians once lived in luxurious ease.

shall not be prolonged: i. e. before God's visitation of judgment comes.

Chapter XIV.

1-4ᵃ. *Editorial prose breaks into the stately rhythm of the Ḳinah measure.* We here have post-exilian philosophy of history prefixed to the lament over the downfall and death of the king of Babylon. Perhaps there was a gap in the text created by its

---

[1] It seems necessary to read here *armenôth* instead of *almenôth*.

yet choose Israel, and set them in their own land: and
the stranger shall join himself with them, and they shall
cleave to the house of Jacob. And the peoples shall take 2
them, and bring them to their place: and the house of
Israel shall possess them in the land of the LORD for
servants and for handmaids: and they shall take them
captive, whose captives they were; and they shall rule
over their oppressors.

And it shall come to pass in the day that the LORD shall 3
give thee rest from thy sorrow, and from thy trouble, and
from the hard service wherein thou wast made to serve,
that thou shalt take up this parable against the king of 4

---

mutilated condition, evident traces of which we have already noticed in the earlier part of the poem, xiii. 2-22. The interpolation by the post-exilian editor serves to connect the two parts xiii. 2-22 and xiv. 4^{b}-21 together.

1-2. God's motive in the overthrow of Babylon by His servant Cyrus (cf. xlv. 1, 4) was His gracious purpose of **compassion on Jacob.** Proselytes from other nations will join Israel, and foreign peoples (evidently meaning Medes and Persians under Cyrus) will enable Israel to achieve domination over their former oppressors.

The word **stranger** here is employed in the sense of 'foreign proselyte,' not of 'sojourner from another tribe' as in earlier literature, cf. Judges xvii. 8 (Stade, *Gesch. Israels*, i. p. 400). See Cheyne's *Introduction to Isaiah* (1895), pp. 74, 312; and Geiger, *Urschrift u. Uebersetz. der Bibel*, p. 353.

3-4^{a}. Translate 'from thy agony and distraction.' The **hard service** is a literary echo from Exod. i. 14 (Priestercodex). For **parable** read, with Kittel and Skinner, 'taunt-song.' The ordinary meaning of Heb. *māshāl* is 'parable' or 'proverb.' But the word acquired also the special sense of 'taunt-song' in Num. xxi. 27; Hab. ii. 6.

This taunt-song is in the same elegiac or *Ḳînah* measure as the train which preceded. Verses 4^{b}-21 contain five strophes of even long verses, each consisting of a longer and shorter line. The main theme is the descent of the king of Babylon to Hades.

First Strophe (verses 4^{b}-8). *Joy of the whole world at the overthrow f the oppressor.*

4^{b}. The LXX read *marhēbah* instead of the unintelligible *madhēbah* of our text (rendered **golden city**, a mere conjecture).

Babylon, and say, [**Ex.**] How hath the oppressor ceased!
5 the golden city ceased! The LORD hath broken the staff
6 of the wicked, the sceptre of the rulers; that smote the
peoples in wrath with a continual stroke, that ruled the
nations in anger, with a persecution that none restrained.
7 The whole earth is at rest, *and* is quiet: they break forth
8 into singing. Yea, the fir trees rejoice at thee, *and* the
cedars of Lebanon, *saying*, Since thou art laid down, no
9 feller is come up against us. Hell from beneath is moved

From earliest times the characters for *d* and *r* have been very similar. Many commentators have followed the LXX. Translate therefore:—

'O how has the oppressor become still—still the turmoil!'

5. The word for **hath broken** (*shābar*) seems to be purposely chosen on account of its assonance with the word for 'hath ceased' (or 'become still,' *shābath*) in the preceding verse.

6. The LXX again come to our aid, and with most critics (Gesenius, Hitzig, Ewald, Duhm, Cheyne, Marti) we should read *mirdath* for *murdaph* (**persecution**), and thus secure more symmetry of expression. Render therefore: 'subjugating nations in wrath—with subjugation unrestrained.'

7. The earth has a respite, now that the world's despot is dead, and breaks forth into exulting strains.

8. The trees unite in the common exultation. The Assyrian monarchs were great lovers of horticulture, and adorned their parks with the rare trees and plants of the lands which they conquered from the days of Tiglath-Pileser I downwards. The Babylonian monarchs indulged in the same taste (see article 'Garden' in *Enc. Bibl.*). Cedar-trees are constantly mentioned in the cuneiform inscriptions, and were employed in building. For **fir trees** substitute 'cypresses.' These shall now be left in their home-land.

Second Strophe (verses 9-11). *Excitement in the Lower World at the advent of the Babylonian monarch.* Such a conception of Hades as we find in the following verses would hardly have been possible in pre-exilian days, and shows clear traces of the influences of the Babylonian environment of the Exile. For we have here a far more developed description of Hades than existed in the earlier literature. Compare the *Descent of Ishtar to Hades*, one of the series in *KIB.*, vol. vi (Jensen), with its portrayal of Hades and its seven encircling walls and gates.

for thee to meet thee at thy coming: it stirreth up the dead for thee, even all the chief ones of the earth; it hath raised up from their thrones all the kings of the nations.
10 All they shall answer and say unto thee, Art thou also
11 become weak as we? art thou become like unto us? Thy pomp is brought down to hell, *and* the noise of thy viols: the worm is spread under thee, and worms cover thee.
12 How art thou fallen from heaven, O day star, son of the

---

9. 'Hades beneath is in excitement at thee—to greet thine arrival:
Arousing[1] shades at thy coming—all chieftains of the earth;
Making to rise from their seats—all the kings of the nations.'

10. Translate by *present* tenses, since we have here vivid examples of what Driver calls the 'dramatic imperfect.' 'They all answer . . . and say.' The first portion of the line is rhythmically too short for the elegiac measure. A word (or two) seems to have dropped out. For **hell** throughout these verses and in the O. T. universally 'Hades' (Heb. *Sheôl*) or the 'underworld' should be read. Of *Hell* in the N. T. sense, as the abode of fire and retributive punishment for the wicked, we have no trace in O. T. literature, but only such germinal suggestive passages as the reference to Gê-Hinnôm (or the valley of Hinnôm, with its ancient rites of Moloch) occurring in Isa. lxvi. 24. Of the life after death very little is said and but little suggested in the O. T. We only know of Hades as a pale shadowy world of spirits who continue to exist and in individual cases may be unlawfully (according to the Hebrew codes of legislation) summoned forth by the arts of the necromancer. On this subject consult Charles, *Eschatology*, pp. 33-50; on Pss. xlix. and lxxiii. p. 73 foll.

Third Strophe (verses 12-15). *Ambition and its fall.*

Verses 12-14. See Gunkel, *Schöpfung u. Chaos*, p. 132 foll.[2]. The

---

[1] The participle in this and the following verse represents the absolute infinite, which form ought in both these examples to be restored to the Hebrew text (Marti).

[2] The entire section devoted to verses 12-14, in Gunkel's stimulating pages, is useful by drawing our attention to mythical aspects and parallels. He is not disposed, however, to find a Babylonian source for the reference to Hêlāl (Lucifer) in verse 12, which might be Phoenician in origin. His attempt to reconstruct the last clause of verse 12 into 'liest stiff upon corpses' cannot be accepted.

morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which
13 didst lay low the nations! And thou saidst in thine heart,
I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above
the stars of God; and I will sit upon the mount of
14 congregation, in the uttermost parts of the north: I will
ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the

reigning monarch of Babylon at the time when this poem was composed was Nabonidus (or Nabunâïd), by no means a strong ruler or a tyrannical despot. The features of the portraiture rather correspond with those of Nebuchadnezzar (Nebuchadrezzar) than with those of the reigning king when Babylonia was overthrown by Cyrus. Accordingly we are justified in regarding this portrayal of 'Lucifer son of Aurora' as that of a monarch as deified representative of Babylonia itself[1]. Winckler attempts without avail to vindicate Nabonidus' martial character, *KAT.*³, i. p. 110 foll.; *Altoriental. Forsch.*, second series, vol. ii. (xi.) p. 200 foll.

12. With respect to this comparison of a monarch with a star cf. Num. xxiv. 17; Rev. xxii. 16. Schrader compares the Assyrian *muštilil*, 'glitterer,' epithet of Ishtar, *COT.*, ii. p. 79. Probably (following the hint of the LXX) we should render: 'overpowering *all* nations.'

13. We are touching here old Semitic conceptions. The **throne above the stars of God** stands within the realm *above* the 'firmament' in which the stars were placed. See article 'Cosmogony' in Hastings' *DB.*, and Bennett's *Genesis* (Century Bible), pp. 66 foll.: cf. Gen. I. 14, 17; Ps. civ. 3; Job xxii. 14. Also the 'mountain of assembly' (**mount of congregation**) in the extreme north was a mythological conception of a Divine mountain of assembly, or Olympus of the gods, situated in the far north. Analogous ideas are to be found among the Indians and Persians. Cf. Ezek. xxviii. 14 and Ps. xlviii. 3, where the glory of such a Divine mount is ascribed to Zion. Among the Babylonians there prevailed a vivid tradition of such a mountain which was called *Arâlû*. Schrader, *COT.*, ii. p. 79 foll.: cf. Jensen, *Cosmologie*, pp. 201–8 on the negative side.

---

[1] This was the more easy as Babylonian and Assyrian monarchs represented themselves as the sons or favourites of national deities. Cf. the opening of Ašurbanipal's inscription (Rassam cylinder, l. 1): cf. Schrader, *COT.*, i. p. 147; and the proper names Naram-Sin, Marduk-abal-iddin (Merodach-Baladan), meaning 'favourite of Sin,' 'Merodach has bestowed a son'; comp. Ps. ii. 7.

Most High. Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to 15
the uttermost parts of the pit. They that see thee shall 16
narrowly look upon thee, they shall consider thee, *saying*,
Is this the man that made the earth to tremble, that did
shake kingdoms; that made the world as a wilderness, 17
and overthrew the cities thereof; that let not loose his
prisoners to their home? All the kings of the nations, all 18
of them, sleep in glory, every one in his own house. But 19
thou art cast forth away from thy sepulchre like an
abominable branch, clothed with the slain, that are thrust
through with the sword, that go down to the stones of the
pit; as a carcase trodden under foot. Thou shalt not be 20
joined with them in burial, because thou hast destroyed

---

15. The **pit** (Heb. *bôr*) is here the equivalent of *Sheôl* or Hades.

Fourth Strophe (verses 16-19). *Amazement of those who behold the Downfall.*

16. Note the ascending climax: 'Those that *see* thee, *gaze* on thee—*take note* of thee.' Here again we should render by present tenses, not future.

18. The first clause should be united with the last of the preceding verse, and not be made into a separate sentence. Render (with Duhm):—

'His prisoners he set not free to their home—kings all of nations,
They all rest in glory—each in his house.'

The **house** here, of course, means the stately sepulchre richly adorned: cf. 1 Kings ii. 10, 34; 1 Sam. xxv. 1, xxviii. 3; Ezek. xliii. 7 foll.

19. In contrast with those who receive stately burial, it is the fate of the Babylonian monarch to be bereft of this honour. The text here is extremely uncertain. **away from thy sepulchre** can only mean: 'far away from the sepulchre which is due to thy rank as monarch.' (The A. V. 'out of thy grave' is impossible.) The Babylonian monarch lies amid the heaps of slain which seem to clothe him like a garment.

Fifth Strophe (verses 20 foll). It is difficult to find any certain beginning or end to this concluding strophe. Duhm and Cheyne attempt to reconstruct the mutilated commencement out of por-

thy land, thou hast slain thy people; the seed of evil-doers
21 shall not be named for ever. Prepare ye slaughter for his
children for the iniquity of their fathers; that they rise not
up, and possess the earth, and fill the face of the world
22 with cities. And I will rise up against them, saith the
LORD of hosts, and cut off from Babylon name and

---

tions of verse 19, leaving gaps where portions of lines are irrecoverably lost. But the results are highly conjectural, and need not be placed before the reader.

20. It is hardly possible to derive any intelligible meaning out of the text as it stands. The preceding verse clearly states that the Babylonian monarch's body was cast forth among the slaughtered multitudes upon the battle-field without the due rites of sepulture. Those who were 'thrust through with the sword' were unburied as well as he. But this verse apparently states that *they* were buried but he was not. This, however, is clearly not meant by verse 19. Now when we examine the first line in the original we can see that it is too short for the proper elegiac measure. Evidently a word has dropped out, and Duhm is probably right in supplying the Hebrew word *abôthêcha* at the beginning of the line, which thus becomes an emphatic *accusativus pendens*:—

> 'E'en with thy fathers thou art not united—in burial.'

To be 'gathered to one's fathers' in Hades and in burial was the desire of every Hebrew.

21. The word rendered **slaughter** (*maṭbēaḥ*) may also mean 'place of slaughter' (as R. V. marg.) 'or instrument of slaughter.' The verb from which the Hebrew substantive is derived means properly the slaughter of animals (*trucidare*). The word **cities** is evidently redundant, since it makes the short line of the Ḳînah verse too long. It has apparently been added by a gloss writer, who wished to make the meaning more definite. Render therefore :—

> 'That they arise not and possess the earth—and fill the face of the world.'

The 'taunt-song' over the fallen monarch and realm closes here.

Verses 22–23 might be regarded as a pendant to chap. xiii rather than to xiv. 4–21. But it can scarcely come from the same hand as the poem in chap. xiii, though the subject is the same, viz. Babylon's downfall. The expression 'saith Yahweh,' so frequently found in Jeremiah and occasionally in other prophetic portions of O. T. literature, occurs twice here and not in the preceding poems at all. Moreover, the poetic rhythm is not so well maintained.

22. The writer is fond of alliterations: 'I will cut off from

remnant, and son and son's son, saith the LORD. I will 23
also make it a possession for the porcupine, and pools of
water: and I will sweep it with the besom of destruction,
saith the LORD of hosts.

[I] The LORD of hosts hath sworn, saying, Surely as I 24
have thought, so shall it come to pass; and as I have pur-
posed, so shall it stand: that I will break the Assyrian in my 25
land, and upon my mountains tread him under foot: then
shall his yoke depart from off them, and his burden de-
part from off their shoulder. This is the purpose that is 26
purposed upon the whole earth: and this is the hand that
is stretched out upon all the nations. For the LORD of 27

Babylon renown and remnant, scion and seed' fairly represents the original in its assonances.

23. It is impossible to be certain as to the rendering of the Hebrew *Kippód*. The versions LXX and Vulgate incline us to render with R. V. **porcupine** or 'hedgehog.' But the translation of A. V. 'bittern' is better suited to the marsh-lands of Babylonia, to which this verse makes express reference. The lowlands of Babylonia surrounding the Euphrates were subject to floods, and after the destruction of the city and surrounding towns by the foreign foe, the canals and watercourses would become neglected and incapable of carrying off the overflow. These lands would be naturally much frequented by waterfowl.

Verses 24–27 contain an undoubtedly genuine fragment of one of Isaiah's oracles. We are transported back to the close of the eighth century and the Assyrian supremacy. The words are evidently directed against Assyria, and we are immediately reminded of x. 5–15. Cheyne indeed, with whom Kittel is disposed to agree, would regard it as a continuation of that prophecy. For the underlying conception is obviously the same, viz. that Yahweh will destroy the pride and oppressive might of Assyria, and so remove the yoke on the shoulders of Judah.

25. then shall his yoke, &c. There is no sufficient reason to regard (with Duhm) the last two parallel clauses of this verse as a later insertion borrowed from x. 27. The style and phraseology are Isaianic, and we are reminded of ix. 4 as well as x. 27.

27. Again we have Isaianic ideas and phraseology. The 'stretched-out hand,' with which we were familiar in the refrain hosts hath purposed, and who shall disannul it? and his hand is stretched out, and who shall turn it back?

28 [R] In the year that king Ahaz died was this burden.

---

to the oracle delivered against Ephraim (ix. 11, 16, &c.), is here directed against Assyria.

This and the preceding verses show that Isaiah contemplated an impending world-judgment. This is held by Marti to be a clear indication, combined with other points strange to Isaiah, that this entire section (verses 24-27) was not composed by the prophet. These other features foreign to Isaiah are (1) that the mountains of Canaan should be the scene of the world-judgment; (2) the expression 'my mountains' is characteristic of a later period. Thus Palestine is called in Ezek. xxxix. 2 foll., and 'my mountains' meets us again in Isa. lxv. 9: cf. Zech. xiv. 5. These arguments are very far from convincing. The conception of Canaan as Yahweh's land was a very old tradition of Semitic as well as Hebrew life, and we know that in the ninth century the Syrians, during their unsuccessful wars with Ahab, believed that Yahweh was god of the mountains. Lastly, it is surely putting too severe a limit on the range of Isaiah's thought to assume, as Marti does, that the prophet only thought of a judgment on Israel and Judah as preparation for the saving of His people, and not of a judgment on the world. In fact this is an arbitrary and artificial restriction. Chap. x. 5 foll., which Marti recognizes as Isaianic in his commentary, show that Isaiah included in his eschatological scheme a Divine judgment on Aššur. But Assyria was in the prophet's time a great world-power, and a Divine judgment on foreign nations would be a natural accompaniment or sequel of God's judgment on Assyria. Moreover, we must not exaggerate the geographical extent of Isaiah's world. Its confines did not extend much beyond the borders of Western Asia, including the southern portion of Asia Minor, and Egypt also, i. e. the full extent of Assyria's empire in the days of Ašurbanipal. 'The purpose that is purposed upon the whole earth' in the days of Isaiah must be estimated in accordance with the historic conditions and intellectual horizons of the age in which that prophet lived.

Verses 28-32. *Oracle against Philistia.* The poem consists of four short strophes each, included respectively in verses 29, 30, 31, 32. We may at the outset dismiss from detailed consideration the theory of Duhm that this brief oracle was composed about 330 B.C. and can be 'most easily explained by reference to the situation of Palestine after the battle of Issos and the capture of Tyre and Gaza by Alexander.' Later on we shall have reason to

[I] Rejoice not, O Philistia, all of thee, because the rod 29

---

show that individual passages even in chaps. i–xxxix may be referred to a period certainly as late and lying well within the Greek period, and the same critical theory serves best to explain the phenomena of the Deutero-Zechariah (chaps. ix–xiv), though pre-exilian prophetic material undoubtedly lies buried in those later chapters of Zechariah. But in the present instance there is nothing either in the language or contents of the brief section which should dispose us to depart so far from the tradition of the editorial superscription. The oracle bears the appearance of being Isaianic, and can be fairly well explained from the political situation of his lifetime. According to Winckler (*Alttestamentliche Untersuch.*, p. 135 foll.) this introductory formula, like that of vi. 1 (q. v.), was not late in redaction, but ancient. For it is evident from this and other examples (Amos i. 1; Jer. xlvii. 1) that the pre-exilian Hebrews dated from special events. After the Exile the Hebrews, like the Babylonians (after 1500 B. C.), dated from the years of a king's reign. Here therefore, as in Isa. vi. 1, we have good reason to treat the superscription with respect. Now what is the date of the death of Aḥaz according to Winckler? He fixes the date in 720–19 B. C. We might then regard Aḥaz as the 'staff that is broken' which formerly smote the Philistines (viz. in the Syro-Ephraimite war), and Sargon is the 'fiery flying serpent' or winged *Sārāf* who attacked the Philistine cities at a subsequent time [1]. This date for the death of Aḥaz certainly does explain the statement of 2 Kings xvi. 2 that he reigned sixteen years. For 736–5 B.C. is the most probable date for his accession. The difficulties which such a date for his death has to encounter are no doubt formidable. For example, it entirely fails to explain 2 Kings xviii. 13, in which the year of Sennacherib's invasion (701 B.C.) is said to be the fourteenth of Ḥezeḳiah's reign, i.e. fourteen years after the death of Aḥaz. For reasons which we have stated in another place (see Introduction, pp. 20–25), we regard the year 715 B. C. as the most probable date for that event. The explanations will then remain the same, Aḥaz being the rod that smote Philistia, and Sargon, whose personality had become thoroughly familiar, the flying *Sārāf* whose might was felt in that smote thee is broken: for out of the serpent's root shall come forth a basilisk, and his fruit shall be a fiery

---

[1] This interpretation of the oracle is not adopted by Winckler, ibid. The 'broken mace' or 'rod' was Sargon or the Assyrian power. Sargon at this time became involved in a struggle with Merodach-Baladan king of Babylon, and sustained a defeat at the hands of Humbanigash king of Elam, ally of Merodach-Baladan. The embassy of Merodach-Baladan to Ḥezeḳiah at the opening of the reign of the latter (720 B. C.) he accordingly places at this date. Respecting the improbability of this view see Introd. p. 30 foll., footn.

---

711 B.C. by Ashdod and other Philistine towns. *COT.*, ii. pp. 87–91.

If, on the other hand, we follow Cheyne's earlier view (1884) and reject the authority of the superscription, we might place the oracle in 705 B.C. when Sargon died, who was the rod or mace that had smitten Philistia (cf. the same metaphor in x. 5), and Sennacherib his destructive successor was to descend upon Philistia as the 'fiery winged serpent.' Such was the view of Robertson Smith, *Prophets of Israel*, p. 319.

What, however, renders this last historical interpretation of the passage, on the whole, more probable than those which precede, is the doubtful reference of the metaphor of a smiting mace or rod to Aḥaz. We have no definite historic proof that Aḥaz, whose military prowess did not stand high, ever inflicted chastisement on the Philistines, though the indications of the Taylor cylinder of Sennacherib point to the conclusion that Judah exercised a certain control over the Philistine towns (e.g. Eḳron) in the days of Ḥezekiah, but this does not afford us any adequate presumption that Aḥaz ever inflicted condign chastisement on Philistia.

We have still left unconsidered yet another view. This is based on the chronology which regards 726 or thereabouts as the death-year of Aḥaz; and with this date or a year previously coincided the death of Tiglath-Pileser III. But there are strong grounds for rejecting this view. It is, of course, quite true that in the years 734 foll. a series of expeditions were carried out by the armies of Tiglath-Pileser against the Syrian and Palestinian States, and the Canon of Rulers records a campaign against *Pilista* for that year. We also know from the mutilated annals of Tiglath-Pileser that not only Peḳaḥ but Ḥanno (Ḥanunu) of Gaza was involved in this overthrow. Ḥanno fled to Egypt (or more probably, as Winckler has taught us, to the land Muṣri in North Arabia, bordering on Edom). See iii Rawl. 10. 2 ll. 19 foll.; and Schrader, *KIB.*, vol. ii. p. 30. Yet, while Tiglath-Pileser might have deserved the designation rod or 'mace,' we are confronted by very serious objections to so early a date as 727–6 for this prophecy. (1) It is hardly possible, in the light of the other Isaianic utterances of this period in the reign of Aḥaz (chaps. iii, v, vii, viii) that Zion would have been described as a sure retreat founded by God for the abased and the poor (verse 30). (2) It is very improbable that Aḥaz was not reigning at the time of Samaria's downfall. The two years' siege of Ephraim's capital can hardly have been maintained unless a monarch known to be friendly to Assyria were reigning in Judah. (3) It is extremely doubtful who could

flying serpent. And the firstborn of the poor shall feed, 30
and the needy shall lie down in safety: and I will kill thy

---

have been intended by the prophet in 726 B.C. under the expression 'fiery winged serpent.' Tiglath-Pileser's successor Shalmaneser hardly merits the title.

28. For **burden** in this superscription render with R.V. marg. 'oracle' (or 'utterance'). See note on xiii. 1.

29. Each verse is now a strophe or stanza of four short lines. We have a curious mixture of metaphors. The root suggests the vegetable kingdom, but the serpent and the 'basilisk,' as well as the flying *Sārāf* or winged burning snake, all belong to the animal kingdom. It is impossible to identify all the details of the elaborated simile. From the introductory remarks to this oracle given above we should probably understand the serpent-root of the adder or basilisk-brood to be Assyria. Philistia has no cause to exult at the death of Sargon, who smote Ashdod and other cities so heavily in 711 B.C. In place of Sargon a worse enemy would ultimately arise and swoop down upon them like a winged *Sārāf*. On the *Sārāf* (Eng. 'seraph') cf. Isa. vi. 3.

30. firstborn of the poor would mean the 'poorest of the poor,' just as in Job xviii. 13 the 'firstborn of death' means the most evil or deadly pestilence. The expression, however, is a strange one, and critics have therefore been busy with their emendations. Thus Koppe, Hupfeld, and Ewald would make an alteration in punctuation only, and read 'on my meadow' (or, reading the form as a plural, 'on my meadows'). So also Duhm. Cheyne, on the other hand, has ingeniously suggested a slight alteration of the text, and renders 'on my mountains,' which suits the geographical configuration of Judah and especially of Zion. Cf. above, verse 25. On the whole we prefer the latter emendation, which accords with the special reference to Zion in the concluding strophe of the poem. Accordingly render:—

'And the abased shall pasture on my mountains,
And the poor shall lie in safety:
Yet I will slay with famine thy seed,
And thy remnant shall one kill.'

Vho are the 'poor' and the 'abased'? Duhm and Marti answer hat the Jews are meant, or humble followers of Yahweh, as we ind in numerous Psalms. These parallels, however, belong to ater literature, and here we have to deal with what is Isaianic. 'hat Jews were included is undoubtedly true, but the prophet is ddressing the Philistines, and he is including them also. In other ords, the oracle has a political significance. It was composed oon after 705, and is an exhortation to the Philistines not to ejoice prematurely at Sargon's death. Another and more for-

31 root with famine, and thy remnant shall be slain. Howl,
O gate; cry, O city; thou art melted away, O Philistia,
all of thee; for there cometh a smoke out of the north,
32 and none standeth aloof at his appointed times. What
then shall one answer the messengers of the nation? That
the LORD hath founded Zion, and in her shall the afflicted
of his people take refuge.

midable foe will arise from the same Assyrian viper-brood. Destruction will come upon Philistia, but there is a refuge for the poor and distressed in Yahweh's mountain-stronghold, viz. Zion. It is a message to Philistia to ally itself with Judah before the storm breaks. The Taylor cylinder of Sennacherib[1] (col. ii. 69 foll.) would lead us to conclude that this exhortation was not unheeded. See Excursus, p. 370.

31. For **thou art melted away** read 'Be melted away,' i. e. 'faint with terror.' The Hebrew word *nāmôg* is an absolute infinitive with imperative force. The foe from the north is obviously the Assyrian army, and this route by the Palestinian coast was precisely that which Sennacherib's Taylor cylinder shows that Assyria actually took in 701 B.C. The reasons for the choice of this route are the comparative fertility of this region, which was therefore capable of supporting an army (see article 'War' in *Enc. Bibl.*). The **smoke** is not so much the smoke of camp-fires as of burning villages (note the frequent recurrence of the word *ashrup*, 'I burnt,' in Assyrian inscriptions).

Translate: 'none standeth apart in his ranks'; 'his' refers to the enemy who has no lonely straggler. All move together as a disciplined host. So R.V. marg. and nearly all modern expositors. We have a close and highly elaborated parallel in the earlier oracle of Isaiah (chap. v. 27 foll.).

32. The opening lines of this last strophe seem to be defective. We should probably render, with Duhm (supplying the missing word in the first line):—

'And what shall [my people] answer
The messenger of the nation . . . ?'

Under the pressure of impending fear deputies come to Ḥezekiah from the Philistine towns. Isaiah frames the reply which Judah shall make: Trust in Yahweh who hath founded Zion (cf. Ps. xlvi).

---

[1] Plainly showing that Philistia leaned upon Ḥezekiah. The feature which exhibits this in the clearest light is the loyal attitude towards Judah exhibited by the inhabitants of Eḳron in handing over to Ḥezeḳiah Padi, the Assyrian puppet.

[**R**] The burden of Moab. **15**
[**Pre-I**] For in a night Ar of Moab is laid waste, *and*

CHAPTERS XV AND XVI. [*Note* Pre-I means Pre-Isaianic].

Oracles on the Doom of Moab. Profoundly interesting problems present themselves in these chapters. The general contents may be summarized thus: xv. 1–4. In the night the chief towns of Moab have been overpowered and destroyed, and there reign universal consternation and sorrow. 5–9. The luckless inhabitants flee with wailing and lamentation from their desolated land, the names of various spots in Moab being mentioned. They carry their possessions with them over the Willow-brook. Indeed, further terrors and slaughter await them. xvi. 1–6. In their desperation an appeal is made to Judah, in which Edom (Sela) also unites, seeking shelter from the foe. They appeal against cruelty and wrong to the throne of David, to its righteousness and mercy. But Judah's answer recalls Moab's arrogance and pride, and is a disheartening refusal of help.

xvi. 7–12. And so the lament is renewed over the hopelessness of Moab's lot, and over the ruined glory of the products of its vineyards and orchards. The joy of the vintage ceases. Verses 13, 14 are an apparent addition by either an editor or Isaiah himself, stating that this is an old oracle against Moab, and concluding with a prophecy that in three years all the glory of Moab will have shrunk to insignificance.

We have thus a double problem to solve, viz. (1) the authorship and approximate date of the addendum; and (2) age and authorship of the oracle on Moab. (1) Nearly all critics are agreed that the writer of the addendum was the prophet saiah. There is certainly nothing in the phraseology which is not Isaianic. We may therefore regard it as exceedingly probable hat Isaiah was the author of this conclusion. (2) With respect o the still earlier oracle against Moab, it has been wellnigh universally held not to be the composition of Isaiah himself. This can be easily demonstrated by a detailed examination of the Hebrew. Though a few expressions in xvi. 1–6 (e.g. 'daughter of Zion') are also to be met with in Isaiah's oracles, a far larger number in the entire oracle xv, xvi. 1–12 are strange to the diction of Isaiah. A list of these may be found in Dillmann-Kittel's ommentary, where the discussion of the problem is clear and full.

Who then was the author, and at what time was the oracle written? With reference to the latter question the following data set forth in the commentary of Dillmann-Kittel) should first be oted: (*a*) since the flight of the Moabites was in a southerly irection towards Edom, the enemy evidently came from the brought to nought; for in a night Kir of Moab is laid waste,

north; (*b*) Judah was at that time considered to be in a position to afford adequate protection to the fugitives from the desolated country; (*c*) the territory of Moab, at that time extending north of the Arnon, included the tribe of Reuben and portions of Gad. Now the conditions (*a*) and also in a negative sense (*c*) are in harmony with the hypothesis that the Assyrians were the foe who overwhelmed Moab. But against such a view the consideration (*b*) is fatal. For in the Assyrian documents no mention of Moab as tributary is to be found till the year 732 in Tiglath-Pileser's reign, and if he be regarded as the conqueror of Moab, it is very difficult to see how Aḥaz, who was the complacent vassal of the Assyrian at that time, could have rendered any effective protection to Moab. Yet this is assumed in xvi. 1–5.

Accordingly we are led to look favourably on the view of Hitzig, who held that the enemy of Moab, to which the oracle refers, was Israel or the northern kingdom in the days of Jeroboam II. The power of Assyria during that interval 780–750 became for a time quiescent, while the kingdom of Syria (Aram) had not recovered from the overwhelming defeat inflicted by Rammân-nirâri III, king of Assyria, in 803 B.C. This paralysis of Syria, the hereditary foe of Israel, enabled the latter under the energetic rule of Jeroboam II to extend their power southwards as well as northwards (2 Kings xiv. 25; cf. Amos vi. 14, the 'sea of the Arabah' or gulf of Elath marking the southern boundary of Israel's expansion[1]). At this time Judah was under the strong and able rule of Uzziah, and, though not unfriendly to the northern kingdom, was quite capable of rendering effective aid to Moab. Whether the authorship of the oracle is to be ascribed, as Hitzig proposes, to Jonah, son of Amittai (2 Kings xiv. 25), it is impossible to determine.

It is possible, indeed, that the oracle might be ascribed to an earlier period when Omri (circ. 890 B.C.) conquered Moab (cf. Moabite Stone, inscription of Mêsha', ll. 4, 5, 7), but respecting the relations of Judah to Moab and to Israel at this time we have no information.

Both Duhm and Marti adopt the extreme course of placing the

---

[1] This statement in 2 Kings xiv. 25 can scarcely be regarded as a literal fact. The permanent occupation of Edom and the gulf of Elath would at once have awakened the hostility of Judah, to whom the port was restored in the reign of Uzziah (ibid. verse 22, and article 'Uzziah,' Hastings' *DB.*). It is, of course, quite possible that the appeal to Judah (xvi. 1–5) was based on the supposition that Jeroboam's policy was regarded with disfavour at the court in Jerusalem as infringing Judah's rights.

and brought to nought. He is gone up to Bayith, and to 2

---

oracle as late as the second century B. C., and the concluding addendum xvi. 13 foll. in the days of John Hyrcanus, 135–105 B. C. (Marti), or Alexander Jannaeus, 104–78 B. C. (Duhm). Contrary to the evidence of the direction of flight of the Moabites *southwards* towards Edom, Marti assumes that the enemy were Arab nomads from the south-east, and compares Ezek. xxv. 4, 5, 10; Obad.; and Mal. i. 1–5. Now the evidence from the book of Jesus Sirachides (see Ryle, *Canon of the O. T.*, p. 109 foll.) points to the conclusion that the prophetic canon was closed in 180 B. C. Very strong evidence, therefore, is required to lead us to assume that not only editorial modifications but also *fresh oracles* came to be inserted after that time in the Isaianic collection. Such evidence is not forthcoming in the present case.

The style of the oracle is far inferior to that of the prophet Isaiah. Cf. the beauty of the strophes and the pendant in ix. 8—x. 4, v. 25–30 with the somewhat cumbrous mode of expression and monotony of xv. 2 foll. The passage, however, has a certain vividness and energy of its own.

There is a further question of interest suggested by comparison of this oracle with the longer and much more detailed prophecy on Moab in Jer. xlviii. On the composite character of this chapter see Giesebrecht's commentary on Jeremiah. In both we have 'going with weeping on the ascent of Luḥith' (xv. 5 and Jer. xlviii. 5), 'cry out or howl for Moab' (xv. 5, xvi. 7, and Jer. xlviii. 31), 'we have heard of the pride of Moab' (xvi. 6 and Jer. xlviii. 29), 'cry of Ḥeshbôn . . . even unto Jahaṣ' (xv. 4 and Jer. xlviii. 34), 'vine of Sibmah' (xvi. 8, 9 and Jer. xlviii. 32), and many other parallels might be cited (see notes)[1]. But a further examination of Jer. xlviii shows that it contains a large number of other literary parallels (notably verse 45 and Num. xxi. 28, 29 and verses 43, 44 with Isa. xxiv. 17, 18). The conclusion suggested by these comparisons to the present writer is that the longer oracle in Jeremiah is largely made up of citations from the same source as that from which this oracle in Isaiah is taken, and from the same source the '*māshāl*' or brief 'taunt-song' in Num. xxi. 27–30 is derived[2]. Probably the original

---

[1] Cf. also the list of references to parallel passages in Kuenen, *Histor.-kritische Einleitung, Zweiter Theil* (*Die Prophet. Bücher*), p. 73.

[2] Omitting the line 'To an Amorite king Siḥôn' in verse 29, which is a later gloss. See Gray, *Numbers*, pp. 304, 305. The metrical features, on the other hand, of the fragment in Numbers do not reveal the Ḳînah measure. No conclusion, however, can be based

Dibon, to the high places, to weep: Moab howleth over Nebo, and over Medeba: on all their heads is baldness,

was an extended *māshāl* (or series of *meshālîm*), composed between 780 and 750 B.C. in reference to the overthrow of Moab by Israel. In Isaiah we have a considerable fragment preserved in nearly its original form.

We have here again the Ḳinah or elegiac metre of the Hebrews, arranged in strophes of six or perhaps seven lines each. Many of the strophes begin with the rhetorical 'therefore' of prophecy.

1. The construction of the opening is doubtful in two points. (1) Some would render the opening particle 'Yea' or 'Indeed' or interjectional 'Ah!'; others would regard it as elliptical = '[We mourn] that.' The former view is certainly preferable. We might also render the particle 'because' or 'for,' but this would be far too prosaic and would make the opening intolerably cumbrous. The translation in the R. V. is therefore to be rejected. (2) If the original Hebrew for 'night' be taken as construct (pronounce *lêl*), the rendering would be 'Ah! in the night when 'Ar-Môab was overwhelmed, 'twas destroyed.' On the other hand, if taken as absolute (pronounce *layil*), we should translate:—

'Ah! in a night 'Ar-Môab was overwhelmed—was destroyed!
Ah! in a night Ḳîr-Môab was overwhelmed—was destroyed!'

The former construction is that of our Massoretic Hebrew text; the latter, however, is decidedly more probable. After this introductory couplet the strophes commence. 'Ar-Môab and Ḳîr-Môab were the two chief Moabite strongholds. The first stood on the left bank of the Arnon, and subsequently became confused with Rabbath Môab, which lay further to the south, and thus obtained the name Arcopolis. The latter, Ḳîr-Môab, is identified with the modern *el Kerak* in the southern part of Moab. Some would further identify it with Ḳîr-Ḥareseth in xvi. 7.

First Strophe (verses 2-4[a]). *Consternation reigns in the district north of the Arnon. The sanctuaries are visited by the distressed inhabitants.*

2. Render: 'One has gone up to the sanctuary[1] and Dibân

---

upon this, (1) as the passage is brief and subjected to textual modification; and (2) it is far from certain how far the elegiac measure was maintained consistently throughout these Meshālîm, from which we know the passage in Numbers to have been derived (verse 27). Both language, tone, and contents favour the hypothesis of the integral connexion of this brief fragment with the Isaiah passage.

[1] There were various spots in Moab which bore this prefix (*bayith*),

every beard is cut off. In their streets they gird themselves 3
with sackcloth: on their housetops, and in their broad
places, every one howleth, weeping abundantly. And 4
Heshbon crieth out, and Elealeh; their voice is heard
even unto Jahaz: therefore the armed men of Moab cry
aloud; his soul trembleth within him. My heart crieth 5
out for Moab; her nobles *flee* unto Zoar, to Eglath-

---

high places, to weep.' Dibôn is the modern Dhibân, about six miles north of Arnon (cf. Num. xxi. 30), the very spot where the Stone of Mesha' (Moabite Stone) was discovered. 'On Nebo and on Mēdebā—Moab howls.' *Jebel Nebâ* is a mountain standing near to the most northerly point of the Dead Sea (Moabite Stone, l. 14). The latter place is the modern Mādebā (cf. Moabite Stone, l. 8), a ruined spot situated on an eminence; cf. Num. xxi. 30. Baldness of the head and shaving of the beard were also signs of mourning among the Hebrews. These signs of mourning are expanded in the parallel, Jer. xlviii. 37.

3. The **broad places** or open spots in an Eastern city of ancient times were the ordinary places of human concourse, where the grey-headed men sat and the children played (Zech. viii. 4 foll.).

4. The places mentioned lie still further north. Ḥeshbôn is represented by the ruins of Ḥesbân, lying twenty-five miles from the Jordan and about eight miles north of Mādebā. El'āleh (meaning apparently 'The ascent') is the modern Ḥirbet el 'Al, lying between two and three miles further north (cf. Num. xxxii. 37). Ḥeshbôn was the capital of the ancient Amorite kingdom (Num. xxi. 26), which subsequently came into the possession of the Israelites (Num. xxxii. 37; Joshua xiii. 17, xxi. 37), but was subsequently lost. Jahaṣ (Jahaz) has not been identified: it probably lay south of Mādebā.

Second Strophe (verses 4^b to 6). *Continuance of the language of mourning, and reference to places.*

The new strophe begins with the characteristic word **therefore.**

5. In place of **nobles** read with R. V. marg. 'fugitives.' Zo'ar (*Ṣo'ar*) is situated south-east of the Dead Sea, now *Ḥirbet eṣ-Ṣâfia* (cf. Gen. xix. 22).

to Eglath-shelishiyah means 'to the third Eglath.' 'Eglath

---

which means 'house' or 'sanctuary,' e.g. Bêth-Diblaim (Jer. xlviii. 22), north of Dibôn; Bêth-Ba'al-Me'ôn (Joshua xiii. 17), now called Ma'în, about six miles south-west of Mēdebā; lastly, a Bêth-Bāmôth mentioned in the Moabite Stone, l. 27.

shelishiyah: for by the ascent of Luhith with weeping they go up; for in the way of Horonaim they raise up a
6 cry of destruction. For the waters of Nimrim shall be desolate: for the grass is withered away, the tender grass

(or 'heifer') was the name given to three distinct spots not far from one another. The 'Eglath here meant was probably the most southern of the three. It may have been the Agalla mentioned by Josephus, *Antiq.* xiv. 1, 4. We find the same name in Jer. xlviii. 34. There is therefore no need to believe that the word is a mere gloss imported here from that passage. At the same time after the verse

'My heart cries out for Moab; her fugitives [fly] unto Zoar'

we lose the Ḳînah rhythm, and all that seems possible is to write:

''Eglath the third [mourns][1] . . . ,'

the shorter line of the verse having been apparently lost. The following verse then runs thus:—

'Ah! up the ascent of Halluḥîth—'mid weeping one climbs it.'

Both in this and the following line 'Ah!' should be read instead of the intolerable and prosaic **for** of the R. V. (so again in verse 6[2]; cf. verse 1 and note). These places are to be found on the southward track of the fugitive crowd. Luḥîth lay, according to the Onomasticon, between Rabbath-Môab and Zoar.

6. R. V. marg. 'desolations' is the more literal rendering. The expression is best explained by the description of the combined expedition against Moab by Israel and Judah in alliance (Jehoram and Jehoshaphat) in the days of Meshaʿ (2 Kings iii. 25), when the wells were stopped up. Nimrim has been identified by Gesenius, Hitzig, Delitzsch, and Cheyne with the *Beth Nimrâ* of Num. xxxii. 36 in the Jordan valley in Wady Nimrin, but this is too far to the north-west. Seetzen discovered a *Moyet Nimméry* ('waters Nimri'), a brook which flows over a stony tract, while in the Onomasticon we find a reference to a place Neberîm or Nemerim lying somewhat north of Zoar. We have also a *Wady Numeire* at the south-east corner of the Dead Sea. See Tristram, *Land of Moab*, p. 57; and Bädeker's *Palästina*, p. 147. As in the case of 'Eglath (heifer), there seem to have been several places of this name. We find the name also in Sabaeo-Arabic inscriptions.

---

[1] It is by no means certain that the strophe uniformly consisted of six verses. Verses 7 foll. seem to point to another conclusion. Marti thinks the strophe may have extended to seven verses (i. e. full lines).

[2] Similarly in Num. xxi. 28.

faileth, there is no green thing. Therefore the abundance 7
they have gotten, and that which they have laid up, shall
they carry away to the brook of the willows. For the cry 8
is gone round about the borders of Moab; the howling
thereof unto Eglaim, and the howling thereof unto
Beer-elim. For the waters of Dimon are full of blood: 9
for I will bring yet more upon Dimon, a lion upon
him that escapeth of Moab, and upon the remnant of the
land.

The name seems to have meant 'leopards,' a word common to most Semitic languages (Heb. *nāmēr*, Arabic *nimr*, and Assyrian *nimru*).

Third Strophe (verses 7–9). *Flight of the Moabites, who carry their possessions with them.*

7. For **abundance** substitute 'savings' which they have been able to rescue from destruction or the spoliation of the invader. The feminine form used in Hebrew is a solitary example. Elsewhere we have the masculine.

It is by no means an easy question to settle whether we should dhere to the Massoretic Hebrew text in this passage, and render **brook of the willows,** as the R. V. translates, and many modern ommentators (following the undoubted meaning of the Heb. *arābîm*); or follow the hint contained in 2 Kings xiv. 25 and Amos vi. 14, and by making a slight change in the text render brook of the "'Arābah"' or brook of the steppe, the 'Arābah being he region that lay south of the depression of the Dead Sea xtending to the gulf of Elath. The latter seems a probable as well as attractive hypothesis. The stream that is meant would then ow in the Wady el Aḥsa, and this geographical identification is in ll accord with verse 5 where Zoar is mentioned, as well as verse 8 here the frontier of Moab is referred-to, and xvi. 1 in which ela' is named.

8. Eglaim and **Beer-elim** cannot be identified. The latter eans 'Well of the mighty' (or perhaps 'of terebinths').

9. Dimon suggests the Hebrew word *dām*, **blood.** The O. T. full of these punning references to names. Some have identified môn with Dibôn (modern Dhibân), but this is mere conjecture.

more: *lit.* 'what is added.' The **lion** which is to be brought on those who escape of Moab probably means the Assyrian wer which caused fresh disasters to befall Moab in the days of glath-Pileser III.

16 Send ye the lambs for the ruler of the land from Sela
which is toward the wilderness, unto the mount of the
2 daughter of Zion. For it shall be that, as wanderin
birds, as a scattered nest, so shall the daughters of Moa

CHAPTER XVI.

Fourth Strophe (verses 1-4^a). *Arrival in Edom and appeal t Judah.*

1. If the date we have assigned to this oracle (or *māshāl*) be correct, Edom, including the port of Elath, was at this time (the reign of Uzziah) within Judah's sphere of influence (see footnot p. 204, and cf. 2 Kings xiv. 22). *Sela'* (or 'the Cliff,' henc rendered *Petra* by the Greeks and so named) was the capita of Edom [1]. The Moabite chiefs in their distress evidently deliberate together on what is to be done. Israel (i. e. the norther kingdom) had overwhelmed their country as it had done formerl in the days of Omri and of Jehoram. They direct their appeal t the powerful king Uzziah, suzerain of Edom. We are not tol who deliberated, but here (as in Ps. ii. 2 ff. and Mic. vi. 1-8) it i clear who were the actors in the drama.

It is far from certain whether we should here translate by a imperative **Send ye**, as in A. V. and R. V., or by a perfect 'The have sent,' as Duhm renders. Moab was a pastoral as well a agricultural country, and the tribute, to which 2 Kings iii. 4 refers as paid annually to the king of Israel, consisted in lamb and their wool.

2. Duhm and Cheyne are certainly right in their view tha this verse has been placed out of its true connexion. Here i only interrupts the natural sequence between verses 1 and 3 Duhm, however, refuses to regard it as an integral portion of th oracle, and places it (translated in roman type instead of italics) a the close of chap. xv, together with the close of verse 9, 'Fo I will bring yet more,' &c. But this is an arbitrary procedur The style of the oracle confessedly falls far below that of th prophet Isaiah, and therefore its defects of style do not milita against the right of xvi. 2 to be regarded as a genuine part of th

---

[1] The view here adopted is that of most commentators (includin Gesenius, Hitzig, Ewald, and Duhm). Kittel, on the other han would prefer not to regard *Sela'* here as a proper name, since it h the definite article in 2 Kings xiv. 7 and the position of Petra or Sel is too far south. He bases his view on Jer. xlviii. 28, but the occu rence of the word 'rock' there has no parallel to its position in t present passage. The relation of Jer. xlviii to the original *māshāl* not so close as that of the briefer oracle before us.

be at the fords of Arnon. Give counsel, execute judgement; make thy shadow as the night in the midst of the noonday: hide the outcasts; bewray not the wanderer. 3
Let mine outcasts dwell with thee; as for Moab, be thou a covert to him from the face of the spoiler: for the extortioner is brought to nought, spoiling ceaseth, the 4

---

oracle. But as the preceding chapter portrays a flight southward, and we have here a reference to the fords of the *Arnon*, its true place in all probability is to be found near the beginning of chap. xv, which seems to contain only the fragment of a strophe near its commencement. Render :—

> 'And it shall come to pass, as wandering birds—a nest cast forth,
> Shall be the daughters of Moab—at the fords of the Arnon.'

We are reminded of the imagery of Isaiah (x. 14, xxxi. 5) in reference to the birds and the despoiled nest. The daughters of Moab signify the daughter-towns or communities (as in Ps. xlviii. 11; Num. xxi. 25; Judges xi. 26).

3. The daughter of Zion (in verse 1) is here addressed. Cities and their communities in Hebrew are always regarded as feminine. The Hebrew text, however, blends two different traditions, *one* of which regards the address as directed to the city (feminine) in its ollective capacity and gives us the imperative singular feminine, nd the *other* regards the individual elders as those who are ddressed, and therefore gives us the second plural masculine. he former conception should be consistently maintained (viz. of collective feminine). We have a like confusion in Ps. xi. 1.

4. Instead of **spoiler** render 'destroyer,' and for **spoiling** read destruction.' The versions (LXX, Peshiṭto and Targum) read the riginal so that the word for **outcasts** has a different vowelunctuation and is connected with the word Moab which imediately follows in the Hebrew. We should then render: Let the outcasts of Moab dwell with thee; be thou a covert to em,' &c. This is grammatically quite possible. The rendering f R. V. (based on Massoretic punctuation) is, however, preferable. robably some word, such as *yôshbê*, 'inhabitants of . . .,' has been ropped out before 'Moab,' for the elegiac measure halts. Duhm nders :—

> 'Let my outcasts dwell with thee—[inhabitants] of Moab
> Be a covert for them—before the destroyer.'

The Fifth Strophe (verses 4^b–6), *The appeal and its rejection*, gins in the middle of this verse. The interpretation is somehat difficult. Probably the perfect tenses should be rendered future perfects. Render :—

5 oppressors are consumed out of the land. And a throne
shall be established in mercy, and one shall sit thereon
in truth, in the tent of David; judging, and seeking
judgement, and swift to do righteousness.
6 We have heard of the pride of Moab, *that* he is very
proud; even of his arrogancy, and his pride, and his
7 wrath; his boastings are nought. Therefore shall Moab
howl for Moab, every one shall howl: for the raisin-cakes

'When oppression shall have been ended, destruction done—
the trampler ceased from the land,
Then shall be established in love a throne. . . .'

Verse **5** begins the apodosis. This appeal from Moab to Judah was based on the fact that the reigning dynasty of Judah had remained in the line of Davidic descendants from the days of Solomon, whereas a series of short dynasties violently cut off had reigned in Samaria during this entire period of 200 years. Even a foreign neighbour would be impressed by the contrast.

In place of **truth** render 'faithfulness.' It was a royal authority that was 'seeking after justice and eagerly bent on righteousness.'

6. Then follows after this glowing appeal to the throne of David and its ethical Messianic glory a chilling response from the court of the Jewish king.

his wrath: properly 'his wrathful insolence.' The last clause of the verse should be rendered 'false is his talk.'

Sixth Strophe (verses 7, 8). *Moab, left to his fate, bewails his lot.*

7. The *raisin-cakes* had their place at the autumnal feast of Ingathering; they consisted of cakes made of the pressed grapes and fine meal. Similar cakes are still made in Cyprus at the festival seasons—a survival of the ancient Phoenician tradition which has strayed into Church usage[1]. We similarly read of

---

[1] Hos. iii. 1 shows that similar raisin-cakes were part of the Baal cult. An interesting inscription discovered in Cyprus illustrates these statements. It is inscribed in black and red ink on small marble pieces. One of them describes the sacrificial expenses incurred for the month Ethanim (= Tishri or September-October). Among them we find the item: 'For two bakers who have baked the cakes for the queen [of heaven].' We have a very instructive parallel to this in Jer. vii. 18, in which reference is made to the small cakes (*Kawwānim*) which the women of Judah in the seventh century baked as offerings to 'Ashtoreth 'queen of heaven.' In the legalized Hebrew ritual we might compare the *maṣṣôth* or unleavened cakes.

of Kir-hareseth shall ye mourn, utterly stricken. For the 8
fields of Heshbon languish, *and* the vine of Sibmah; the
lords of the nations have broken down the choice plants
thereof; they reached even unto Jazer, they wandered
into the wilderness; her branches were spread abroad,
they passed over the sea. Therefore I will weep with the 9
weeping of Jazer for the vine of Sibmah: I will water
thee with my tears, O Heshbon, and Elealeh: for upon
thy summer fruits and upon thy harvest the *battle* shout

---

raisin-cakes distributed by David at a festival in honour of Yahweh, 2 Sam. vi. 19.

Ḳir Ḥareseth appears to be identical with the Ḳir Ḥeres in verse 11, and both are probably the same as the 'Ḳir of Moab' in xv. 1.

8. Translate: 'whose choice vine-plants beat down the lords of nations.' The vines of Sibmah were celebrated, and the wine of this vintage was drunk in many a lordly banquet and intoxicated the revellers. The wide prevalence of drunkenness in the upper classes of Canaanite society is often referred to in the pre-exilian prophets: cf. v. 11, 22, xxviii. 1, 3; Amos vi. 4, 6; and other passages. See also Introduction to this Commentary, p. 44. The word 'beat down' is the same in the original as that which is used when Jael beat down Sisera with the hammer (Judges v. 26). It is employed as a strong metaphor to describe the intoxicating effects of the wine. So luxuriant were these vine-plants that they extended as far as Ja'zer in the north (sixty-five miles north of Ḥeshbôn and forty miles west of Rabbath Ammon) and even 'strayed' into the desert. The expression 'stray' exactly represents their haphazard mode of growth, which requires no stick or tree by way of support. 'Their branches spread abroad and passed over to the sea,' the **sea** meant here being, of course, the Dead Sea. Some would interpret the Hebrew as meaning crossed over the sea to he western side, viz. En-gedi. But this is not a necessary rendering, and in this case improbable. We have, therefore, followed Duhm, Kittel, and Marti in translating 'passed over *to* the sea.'

Seventh Strophe (verses 9, 10). *Continuation of the lament.*

9. The word rendered 'battle shout' in Hebrew means any shout f exultation. It may be the hurrah! of the warriors on storming stronghold (cf. Jer. li. 14), or the exulting cries of those who read the grapes in the wine-press (lxiii. 3; Joel iv. 13 (Heb. A.V. i); and *Hebrew Antiquities*, p. 101). Here the former sense, the

10 is fallen. And gladness is taken away, and joy out of the
fruitful field; and in the vineyards there shall be no
singing, neither joyful noise: no treader shall tread out
wine in the presses; I have made the *vintage* shout to
11 cease. Wherefore my bowels sound like an harp for
12 Moab, and mine inward parts for Kir-heres. And it shall
come to pass, when Moab presenteth himself, when he
wearieth himself upon the high place, and shall come to
his sanctuary to pray, that he shall not prevail.

battle-shout of the invader, is meant. In the following verse the same word is used in the latter sense (cf. Jer. xxv. 30).

10. 'In the vineyards no ringing cry is uttered—no joyful noise: Wine into the wine-vats treader treadeth not—the shouting is stilled!'

R.V. **in the presses** is quite wrong. The wine-*press* (Heb. *gath* or *pûrah*) was a broad, shallow, rock-hewn cavity (cf. Isa. v. 2, and *Hebrew Antiquities*, p. 99) into which the grapes were cast and trodden in the gay autumnal vintage-season. The wine-*vat* was a narrower and deeper cavity beneath the 'press' (called, as here, *yékebh*), into which the grape-juice from the wine-press flowed.

The first person singular form rendered **I have made . . . to cease** (both here and in the parallel Jer. xlviii. 33) should probably be pronounced in the original as a *passive* of the causative form: 'shouting has been made to cease' (cf. LXX).

Eighth Strophe (verses 11, 12) is obviously mutilated. *Sympathy with Moab. Vain supplication by Moab at his high places.*

11. sound, *lit.* 'murmur.'

12. The high place referred to is obviously that of Moab's deity Chemosh. A comparison with the parallel in Jer. xlviii. 13 has suggested to Ewald and Cheyne that we might follow the hint of the latter passage and by a comparatively slight modification of the text begin the apodosis to the temporal clause after **prevail** by adding on the extra clause: 'that Moab shall be ashamed of Chemosh[1],' which had dropped out of the Isaiah text. It is quite possible that we might in this way recover the beginning of an extra verse in this mutilated strophe.

---

[1] The whole passage would then read: 'And it shall come to pass, when Moab presenteth himself (or appears), . . . and shall come to his sanctuary to pray, and shall not prevail, that Moab shall be ashamed of Chemosh.'

[**I**] This is the word that the LORD spake concerning Moab in time past. But now the LORD hath spoken, saying, Within three years, as the years of an hireling, and the glory of Moab shall be brought into contempt, with all his great multitude; and the remnant shall be very small and of no account.
13
14

[**R**] The burden of Damascus. **17**

[**I**] Behold, Damascus is taken away from being a city,

Isaiah's comment on the above, accompanied by his own brief prophecy (verses 13, 14). The **three years** are intended to express a brief interval, no longer than the period for which a man cares to hire himself. It is impossible to be certain as to the date when this addendum was written, as we possess no clues to guide us. We therefore do not know whether, according to the prophet, it was Sargon or Sennacherib who was to be author of Moab's further humiliation.

CHAPTER XVII.

An Oracle of doom against Damascus and Ephraim (verses 1–11). We obviously have in this passage one of the earlier oracles of Isaiah. The kingdom of Ephraim exists, and the fortress-citadel Samaria. To both, as to the kingdom of Syria (Aram) and its capital Damascus, there shall come a ruinous overthrow, leaving behind it only a small remnant (verses 1–6). The result will be a return to Israel's true God, 'the Holy One of Israel,' and abandonment of images, altars, and the alluring cults after which the people had strayed (verses 7–11).

This oracle, therefore, contemplates a time when the kingdoms of Damascus and Samaria were not only existing, but were in alliance and were comparatively unscathed by the ravages of war. No reference is made to the coalition against Judah. It is possible therefore that we have here the earliest oracle delivered by Isaiah after the death-year of Uzziah.

It will be observed that Assyria is not expressly named, though it was evidently present to the mind of the prophet. Probably the year 736 B.C. would not be too early a date for this prophecy (similarly, Ewald, Cheyne, Duhm). In its original form and extent it apparently consisted of a series of eight-lined strophes, to which was added the concluding phrase 'Saith the Lord of Hosts,' or 'Saith the Lord God of Israel,' or some analogous expression.

First Strophe (verses 1–3). *Downfall of Damascus and Israel.*

1. **taken away from being a city** means, is destroyed so that it ceases to be a city any longer.

2 and it shall be a ruinous heap. The cities of Aroer are
forsaken: they shall be for flocks, which shall lie down,
3 and none shall make them afraid. The fortress also shall
cease from Ephraim, and the kingdom from Damascus,
and the remnant of Syria; they shall be as the glory of
the children of Israel, saith the LORD of hosts.

4 And it shall come to pass in that day, that the glory of
Jacob shall be made thin, and the fatness of his flesh
5 shall wax lean. And it shall be as when the harvestman
gathereth the standing corn, and his arm reapeth the

---

2. There were two places called *'Aro'er*, both situated in the Moabite territory: the first, mentioned in Num. xxxii. 34, situated on the northern bank of the Arnon in its middle part rather more than two miles south of Dibôn (Dibân); the second was situated near Rabbath Ammon (Joshua xiii. 25).

cities of Aroer might mean the towns lying around the Aroer. We have here a geographical puzzle. It is hardly probable, or even possible, that at this time the Aramaean kingdom extended so far south, and, unless we are to assume that some unknown 'Aro'er existed in Syria, we must regard the passage with some suspicion: and this is confirmed by reference to the LXX. Accordingly it would be better with Lagarde, Cheyne, and Duhm to accept the reading there suggested, and in place of 'the cities of 'Aro'er are forsaken' to read: '[a ruined heap] abandoned for ever.'

The image in the latter part of the verse reminds us of chap. v. 17.

3. The **fortress** which is to cease from Ephraim is Samaria, the stronghold erected by Omri about 890 B.C., and from that time the royal residence of the kings of Northern Israel. (So Gesenius, Hitzig, and Orelli.) Or it might be regarded as a general or collective expression (Delitzsch and Guthe). The former is more probable, since Samaria occupied in Ephraim the position of Damascus in Syria. The interpretation which makes the expression refer to Damascus or Syria as the bulwark of Ephraim against Assyrian invasion (Duhm, Skinner, Marti) is much less probable.

Second Strophe (verses 4-6). *Israel's humiliation.* ***A*** *slight remnant only left.*

4. For **made thin** read 'impoverished.'

5. We have a hint in this passage that the ears were cut by the reapers, not very low down, but midway between ears and

ears; yea, it shall be as when one gleaneth ears in the
valley of Rephaim. Yet there shall be left therein 6
gleanings, as the shaking of an olive tree, two or three
berries in the top of the uppermost bough, four or five in
the outmost branches of a fruitful tree, saith the LORD,
the God of Israel. In that day shall a man look unto 7

---

soil, for the ancient Canaanite harvesters set little value on straw[1]. The **valley of Rephaim** lay south-west of Jerusalem, in the direction of Beth-lehem. The prophet makes his metaphor vivid to his Judaean countrymen by this local reference. The LXX misunderstood the word Rephaim.

6. For **shaking** read 'beating,' with R.V. marg., and for **outmost branches** substitute 'twigs.' The LXX omitted the word for 'fruit-tree' from their rendering.

Third Strophe (mutilated: 2 verses only, verses 7, 8). *Man's heart turns to God.*

Verses 7 and 8 are treated by Duhm and Marti as a later insertion. This cannot be argued on the basis of language, since, as Cheyne admits, it is essentially Isaianic, though he surrenders the Isaianic authorship because 'it is certain that the style is not bright' (*Introduction*, p. 94). No valid argument can be built on the use of the single phrase **his Maker** (which also occurs in exilian and post-exilian passages such as li. 13, liv. 5, and xxvii. 11), when it is remembered that the corresponding verb is employed at the opening of the pre-exilian Yahwistic cosmogony (Gen. ii. 4). Nor can it be said that this passage constitutes any marked interruption to the sequence of thought. The following strophe, which is acknowledged to be genuinely Isaianic, and also begins with the same phrase 'In that day,' sustains the same current of ideas. At the same time these two verses stand better *after* the strophe that succeeds it (verses 9-11), and form an appropriate sequence to that strophe as well as climax to the poem (the last five or six lines having been lost).

---

[1] Comp. *Hebrew Antiquities,* pp. 88 and 93, and see the reproduction of the relief from the tomb of Ti in Sakkara on the frontispiece, which portrays Egyptian harvest operations. The LXX rendering is based on the reading *zera'* ('seed') instead of *zerô'ô* ('his arm') of our Massoretic Hebrew text. Their translation runs: 'And it shall come to pass, just as one gathers the *standing harvest* and reaps the seed of the corn-ears.' This gives the Hebrew word *Ḳāṣír* its ordinary meaning, but a feminine gender, which is contrary to usage.

his Maker, and his eyes shall have respect to the Holy
8 One of Israel. And he shall not look to the altars, the
work of his hands, neither shall he have respect to that
which his fingers have made, either the Asherim, or the
9 sun-images. In that day shall his strong cities be as the

8. The words **altars, Asherim,** and **sun-images** are almost certainly interpretative glosses added by a later scribe. They are prosaic additions which disturb the rhythm of the lines. The Ashērah (plur. Ashērim) has been held by many recent critics, especially Wellhausen and Robertson Smith, to have been simply the sacred pole or symbol of fertility to be found in Semitic shrines generally, not Canaanite only, but also Babylonian. Even the syncretic cult of Yahweh had the Ashērah or sacred pole as its accompaniment[1] (2 Kings xiii. 6, xxiii. 6, 15), and it is frequently met with in connexion with the stone pillar or Maṣṣebah. Barton (*Semitic Origins*, p. 106 footnote) is disposed to connect its origin with the wooden posts which marked out the limits of ancient Semitic sanctuaries; and Moore (in *Enc. Bibl.*, article 'Ashēra') explains through this the origin of the Assyrian word for 'sanctuary,' *ashirtu* or *eshirtu.* This is confirmed by the use of the word in the Phoenician inscription cited by G. Hoffmann, which is a dedication 'to the 'Ashtart ('Ashtoreth) in the Ashērah [= sanctuary] of El Hammon.' But whatever be the origin of the expression, it came to be the name of a female deity. This is clearly shown in the Tell el Amarna tablets, in which we find frequent mention of an 'Abd-ashratum = Heb. 'Ebed-Ashērah, 'servant of Ashērah,' a proper name formed on the analogy of many other Semitic names meaning 'Servant of —,' some deity being compounded with the word for 'servant.' Hommel has also found on a Minaean (ancient Arabic) inscription the name of a goddess *Athirat*, consort of the deity Wadd. The form of the name is simply the Arabic equivalent of the Heb. Ashērah. See Moore's article 'Asherah' in *Enc. Bibl.*, where the fullest and clearest statement of facts is given.

The **sun-images** were pillars dedicated to the worship of the sun (*Ḥammānim*); see article 'Pillar' in Hastings' *DB.*). The word seems to belong to later times than the ordinary word for sacred pillar (*maṣṣēbah*).

Fourth Strophe (verses **9**–11). *Abandoned state of the towns a consequence of Israel's forgetfulness of Yahweh.*

9. The LXX here guide us to the right text, which should be forsaken places in the wood and on the mountain top, which were forsaken from before the children of Israel: and it shall be a desolation. For thou hast forgotten the 10 God of thy salvation, and hast not been mindful of the rock of thy strength; therefore thou plantest pleasant

---

[1] We may compare the Ashērah connected with the worship of Baal, which was 'upon (or by) the altar,' Judges vi. 25, 30.

---

rendered thus: 'In that day shall thy cities be abandoned like the abandoned spots forsaken by the *Hivites and the Amorites*, before the Israelites: and it shall become a desolation.' It seems more probable, from a careful examination of our corrupted Hebrew text, that the original reading was 'Hivites and Amorites' rather than in the reverse order given in the LXX and R.V. marg. Some critics consider that the concluding relative clause in the Hebrew rendered by 'before the Israelites . . . desolation' is a later explanatory gloss. The style is certainly prosaic.

The name *Amorites* is a 'comprehensive term for the people whom Israel conquered and succeeded on both sides of the Jordan' (Moore on Judges iii. 5). In the Tell el Amarna tablets (1450-1400 B.C.) the name is used as a designation for Canaan (mât Amurri), while in the ancient Egyptian documents we find *Amar* used as a designation for a people dwelling as far north as Kadesh on the Orontes (Max Müller, *Asien u. Europa*, p. 217, and pp. 223-6). The term Amorite in **E** (the document of Northern Israel), as well as in Deut. and Amos ii. 10, means pretty much the same as the more common designation 'Canaanite' in the document J, which belongs to Southern Israel. Though both the names Amorite and Canaanite (*Kinaḫḫi*) are found in the Tell el Amarna tablets, there is no certain indication that they represented different nationalities (so Moore).

On the other hand, the name *Hivites* has been explained in two different ways. One explanation connects it with a word signifying a nomad or Bedāwî encampment, just as 'Perizzite' has been explained as meaning 'plain-dweller.' But there is another etymology, which Moore is disposed to prefer, which connects it with the Arabian Ḥayyat, meaning 'snake.' The Hivites, like many Arabic tribes enumerated in Robertson Smith's *Kinship and Marriage*, ascribed their origin to an animal totem. They were the 'snake' tribe. There are many similar tribes in South Africa and North America. This, however, is only an ingenious theory, though not improbable, since other Hebrew names, as Leah and Rachel, are capable of a similar explanation.

10. The God of the Hebrews was frequently called their rock of strength, refuge, or salvation (victory)—xxx. 29; Deut. xxxii; Ps. xxxi. 3, lxii. 8, lxxi. 3, xciv. 22, xcv. 1—and this same word for rock (*ṣûr*) also enters into combination with the name for

11 plants, and settest it with strange slips: in the day of thy planting thou hedgest it in, and in the morning thou makest thy seed to blossom: but the harvest fleeth away in the day of grief and of desperate sorrow.

12 Ah, the uproar of many peoples, which roar like the

---

deity in proper names. In Babylonian names we have the word *shadû*, 'mountain,' similarly compounded. Translate:—

'Therefore, though thou plantest plantings of Adonis,
And sowest it with the slip of a strange [God]:
And, whenever thou plantest, hedgest it in,
And in the morn causest thy seed to sprout:
[Yet] vanished is the harvest in the day of distemper
And malignant pain.'

'Plantings of pleasaunce' (or sweet charm) is an allusion to the cult of Adonis, about which we know but little, though we have certain indications to guide us. It must be recollected that Northern Israel, through its geographical position, became exposed to the religious influences of the north, i. e. Phoenicia and Syria. Chief among these was the cult of Tammuz (Babylonian *Dumuzi*), invoked as *Adonî*, 'my Lord,' whence the Greek name *Adonis* (cf. Ezek. viii. 14). The word in Hebrew, rendered 'pleasaunce' above, is *naʻamānîm* (root *nʻm*), and proper names, Phoenician as well as Hebrew, like *Abinoʻam* and *Aḥinoʻam*, contain a common element derived from the same root *nʻm*, which was a designation of this old Semitic deity of love (who appears in the Babylonian epic of the Descent of Ishtar to Hades)[1]. Gardens were cultivated with vine-slips in his honour, as Robertson Smith suggests, 'pots of quickly withering flowers, which the ancients used to set at their doors, or in the courts of temples.' The tradition was borrowed by the Greeks, and called 'gardens of Adonis' (cf. Plato, *Phaedrus*, 276). The word 'anemone' has been held to contain the word *noʻam*, the Semitic name for Adonis, and Lagarde recalls the significant fact that the Arabs call the red anemone 'the wounds of Adonis[2].'

Chapters XVII. 12–XVIII. 7.

We have in this group of oracles, which we have combined roaring of the seas; and the rushing of nations, that rush like the rushing of mighty waters! The nations shall rush 13

---

[1] Respecting Tammuz, see Morris Jastrow, *Religion of Babylonia*, pp. 96, 482, 564 foll., 574 foll. The name of the Syrian Naʻaman is that of this deity—an epithet applied to Tammuz and the singular form of the very word in our Hebrew text. Cf. also the names Naʻamah, sister of Tubal Cain (Gen. iv. 22), as well as Noʻomi (Naomi) in the Book of Ruth.

[2] Shaḳâiḳu-n-*noʻmân*.

---

together, passages whose import is obscure and mutual interrelation far from certain. That they are Isaianic seems fairly evident from the language and style. The metaphor of the roaring sea, applied to the advancing hosts of the Assyrians, reminds us of the moaning sea in chap. v. 30, at the close of a passage of great graphic power. The closing verse, i.e. xviii. 7, might be a prosaic and later addition.

Opinions are much divided as to the connexion of chap. xviii with the close of xvii, which has been advocated by a series of exegetes, Rosenmüller, Gesenius, Ewald, Knobel, Dillmann, Kittel, and Duhm. It is argued by Dillmann that xviii. 4–6 would hardly be intelligible unless the clear reference to the overthrow of the Assyrians in xvii. 12–14 had not preceded.

If we regard the conclusion of chap. xvii as connected with chap. xviii, we have still to determine the time as well as historic circumstances to which both refer. About this there is now a fairly strong consensus of opinion. Most critics, including Gesenius and Ewald, as well as Driver and Duhm, would refer them to the days of Sennacherib. Indeed no other date than 702 B.C. (circ.) seems to have any probability. This date indeed is assigned by Cheyne to chap. xviii; but to xvii. 12–14, which he separates from the former, he attributes a much earlier year, 723. Yet we have no reason to believe that Isaiah at that time believed in the rapid decay of the Assyrian power. The date we have already assigned to chap. ix. 7—x. 4, v. 25–30 would indicate precisely the opposite. The year 711 B.C. is equally impossible: chap. xx proves that at that time Isaiah showed no belief in the weakening of Assyria under Sargon's strong military rule. It is otherwise with 702 B.C. The year to which we assigned the prophecy x. 5 foll. was about 704. In that oracle the overthrow of the Assyrian and his arrogance was plainly announced. To nearly the same date we may assign the Isaianic utterances xvii. 12—xviii. 6.

The attempt of Stade (in *Zeitsch. für alt-testamentliche Wissensch.*, 1883) and of Marti (in his commentary) to discover reasons for the post-Isaianic authorship of xvii. 12 can hardly be regarded as successful. The reference to the many and mighty nations that are to attack Jerusalem might be well understood to allude to the various races included in an Assyrian army. These traits cannot be considered to be indications of those later conceptions of the nations of the world assembled against Jerusalem, such as we find in Ezek. xxxviii–ix and Joel iii. 14 and similar eschatological passages. It is equally futile to lay any stress (as Marti does) on

like the rushing of many waters: but he shall rebuke them, and they shall flee far off, and shall be chased as the chaff of the mountains before the wind, and like the
14 whirling dust before the storm. At eventide behold terror; *and* before the morning they are not. This is the portion of them that spoil us, and the lot of them that rob us.

18 Ah, the land of the rustling of wings, which is beyond

---

the expression 'your plunderers' and 'robbers' (verse 14 ad fin.). The occurrence of such epithets for the enemies of the Jews cannot be considered to be a sign of lateness.

The general contents of xvii. 12—xviii. 7 may be summarized as follows:—Vast hordes of races rage in the land like a storm-tossed sea, but at Yahweh's rebuke they disperse (xvii. 12-14). To the distant people of Ethiopia the prophet through his messenger announces an impending crisis, of which all the nations of the world should be aware (xviii. 1-3). For Yahweh Himself, after allowing the enemy for a long time to abide and flourish in peace, will suddenly rob him of his resources and strength (verses 4-6).

12. It is difficult to express in an English translation the full meaning and power of sound conveyed by the original. The resonant word translated 'uproar' conveys the idea belonging to that English word, as well as that of the R. V. marg. 'multitude.' It signifies a vast volume of sound coming from a great body, whether of moving men or moving waters (1 Sam. iv. 14, xiv. 19; Job xxxix. 7; 1 Kings xviii. 41). The other resonant Hebrew word rendered **rush** conveys the idea of desolation as well as of rushing.

13. We are reminded of the vivid description of the onward destructive flood of Assyrian invasion in Isa. viii. 7, 8: cf. v. 25-30.

14. But, unlike those earlier utterances, we are now assured that the desolation will be only for one brief evening. It will have vanished by the morning, and the destroyer will be no more! Cf. Isa. xxxvii. 36-38.

CHAPTER XVIII.

1. The idea which pervades the preceding verses, the speedy overthrow of the Assyrian power, evidently dominates the present passage. An embassy is about to come to Jerusalem from Cûsh (or Ethiopia). The danger of an impending Assyrian invasion prompts the Ethiopians to open negotiations with

the rivers of Ethiopia: that sendeth ambassadors by the 2
sea, even in vessels of papyrus upon the waters, *saying*,
Go, ye swift messengers, to a nation tall and smooth, to

Ḥezeḳiah, whose policy at this time was guided by the prophet Isaiah. The embassy will come up the Nile stream in boats. The opinion of leading Egyptologists renders it impossible for us to associate the Ethiopian king Tirhaḳah (Taharḳo, Assyrian Tarḳû) with this embassy. It is now definitely ascertained that Tirhaḳah did not ascend the throne till 694 B. C. (according to others 691). See article 'Tirhakah' in *Enc. Bibl.*; and Winckler, *KAT.*^{3}, pp. 87-94, 273 and 321.

The Hebrew phrase rendered **rustling of wings** has been much discussed and variously explained. (1) The earliest interpretation of which we have any cognizance is that of the LXX, which renders the expression 'winged boats,' i. e. 'swiftly travelling boats' (so Targ., Kimḥi, and Ewald). This is confirmed by the Arabic word *zulzul*, 'ships,' which is closely similar to the Hebrew. We also observe that vessels of papyrus-reed are mentioned in the following verse. It is, however, doubtful whether the conception would be anticipated in this way in verse 1, or whether this was the most vivid and truthful characterization of the land, and would be the most likely to impress the prophet. It must be confessed, however, that it has more probability than (2) the view which interprets the phrase as meaning 'a shadow on both sides (*lit.* wings).' This is the interpretation of the versions of Aq. as well as Pesh. The Jewish expositors Saadiah and Abulwalid held that this referred to the shadows cast by the two mountain-chains of Egypt, but this would hardly be a sufficiently distinctive characteristic. We can only regard it as a description of the feature that prevails in all tropical countries, in which the sun's shadow in varying times of the year is cast now on the north and now on the south side of the object (hence Strabo calls their inhabitants ἀμφίσκιοι). But this theory rests on the slender hypothesis that the reduplicated Hebrew form means the same as the monosyllabic *ṣēl*, 'shadow.' Even then the expression would not be without its difficulties. (3) Far more probable is the view which sees here a reference to the winged insect, viz. the Tsetze-fly, called in the language of the Galla tribes *tzaltzalya*, better known to us as the Central African Tsetze-fly. The root of the name in Hebrew is probably mimetic, and means 'to whirr,' 'rustle.' Accordingly translate: 'Land of the whirr of wings.'

The expression **beyond the rivers of Ethiopia** takes us further south than latitude 18°, for the name Kûsh (Cush) meant in the a people terrible from their beginning onward; a nation that meteth out and treadeth down, whose land the

---

days of Isaiah what we now designate by Nubia (cf. Gen. x. 6)[1]. Probably we should understand by the 'rivers' the *Atbara* and the Blue Nile (Bahr el Azraḳ). The knowledge possessed by the prophet of these distant regions was probably, like that of his countrymen generally, extremely vague. This, however, is no sufficient reason for cutting out this latter part of verse 1 as not genuine (as Duhm and Cheyne propose).

2. Ambassadors have been sent from Ethiopia to Jerusalem, and have travelled by papyrus-boats down the Nile, which is here called a sea. The occasion of the embassy is evidently the aggressive designs on Egypt entertained by Sennacherib, the new Assyrian monarch, which had alarmed Ethiopia.

The term **sea** applied to the Nile has an exact parallel in xix. 5, Nahum iii. 8. In Jer. li. 36 it is applied to the Euphrates. See Schrader, *COT.*, ii. p. 149 footnote.

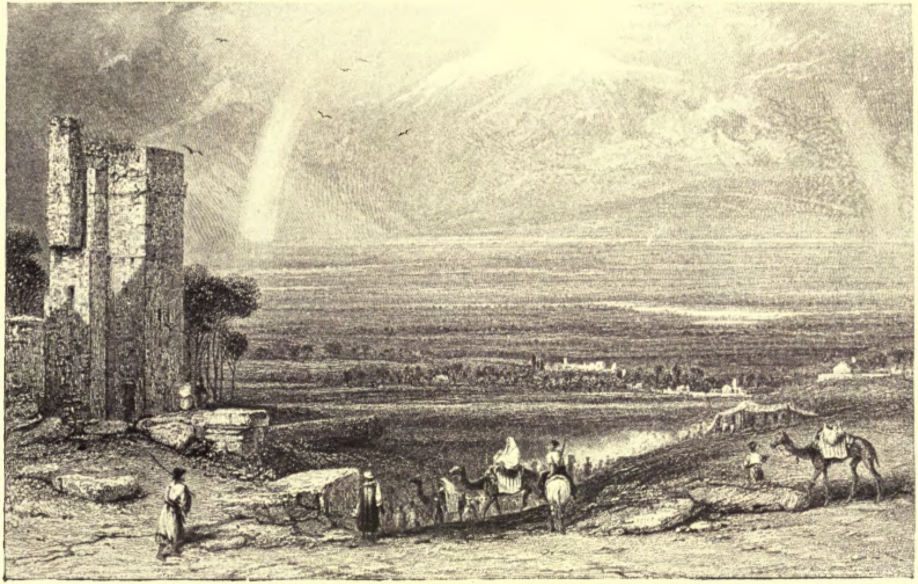
These swift messengers, sailing rapidly down the broad Nile on their light boats of papyrus-reed, are bidden by the prophet to return to their own people with a message from Yahweh, intended to reassure them against overwhelming dread of the Assyrian foe.

This verse, it must be confessed, is very obscure. The word **saying**, introduced by R. V. and A. V. into their rendering, is very misleading. Instead of the verb **go**[2] (by which the original is correctly reproduced) we should expect 'return,' since it is generally assumed that the nation **tall and smooth** are the Ethiopians. The word in Hebrew rendered 'smooth' is applied in Ezek. xxi. 14 (in another participial form of the same verb) to a sharp, '*polished*' sword. Probably it here refers to the shining bronzed complexion of some race, and it has been generally assumed that the Ethiopians or Nubians are meant. In Herodotus

---

[1] Hommel, who coincides with Winckler in identifying in many passages, e. g. Isa. xx, the Hebrew name for Egypt (*Miṣraim*) with the North-Arabian land Mosar (*Muṣrân*), which corresponds with the *mât muṣri* of the Assyrian inscriptions, would also identify Kûsh here with the land Kôsh lying to the south of Moṣar in Western Arabia. The 'rivers of Ethiopia' in this passage are the Giḥôn and Pishôn, which he places in this region. He would identify the land *Miṣraim* (Egypt) of chap. xix with this same North-Arabian country (*Aufsätze u. Abhandlungen*, iii. pp. 300 foll., 309 foll.). These hypotheses may be dismissed as mere conjecture.

[2] On the other hand, we have a similar use of this verb 'to go' in Hebrew in the sense of 'return' in Judges xxi. 21, 24.



Drawing by A. W. Callcott, R.A.

THE LAND OF ARARAT (ARMENIA)

rivers divide! All ye inhabitants of the world, and ye 3
dwellers on the earth, when an ensign is lifted up on the
mountains, see ye; and when the trumpet is blown, hear
ye. For thus hath the LORD said unto me, I will be still, 4
and I will behold in my dwelling place; like clear heat
in sunshine, like a cloud of dew in the heat of harvest.
For afore the harvest, when the blossom is over, and the 5
flower becometh a ripening grape, he shall cut off the

iii. 20 (cf. also 114) the Ethiopians are called 'the tallest and most handsome of all men.'

The latter part of the verse is exceedingly difficult, and the construction uncertain. Moreover, the LXX version gives us unmistakable warning that the text is corrupt. To restore the text appears to be an impossible task. The text of the Hebrew Bible we might render: 'unto a nation dreaded from that place and onwards; a mighty, conquering race whose land streams (or canals) cleave asunder[1].'

3. Though the message which the prophet sends through the messengers to Ethiopia is intended for that country, it has important significance for all the inhabitants of the world known to Isaiah. The prophet knew full well that the brunt of the impending attack would fall on Jerusalem. Ethiopia and the other nations are called upon to listen when the banner is raised and the alarm signal given for marshalling the Assyrian armies to battle.

4. Yahweh awaits the issue, beholding it with perfect calm from His abode, or, as Duhm considers, from the station which Yahweh has taken up as his place of observation. The comparison in the latter part of the verse is obscure. The season of the corn-harvest in Palestine lasts from Easter to Pentecost (beginning of April to middle of May). Just as the glowing heat of the sunshine by day and the heavy dew during the night do their steady work in ripening the harvest, so do God's 'purposes ripen fast.'

5-6. But at a critical moment, ere the harvest has arrived, when the blossom is over and the flower turns into the ripening grape, there comes the knife of destiny which remorselessly severs

---

[1] The rendering 'cleave asunder' is really conjectural. The verb occurs nowhere else in the O. T. except in this chapter. Aq., Symm., and other versions, as well as Targ., give a different interpretation: they render 'carry off,' 'wash away.'

sprigs with pruning-hooks, and the spreading branches
6 shall he take away *and* cut down. They shall be left
together unto the ravenous birds of the mountains, and
to the beasts of the earth: and the ravenous birds shall
summer upon them, and all the beasts of the earth shall
7 winter upon them. [I?] In that time shall a present be
brought unto the LORD of hosts of a people tall and
smooth, and from a people terrible from their beginning
onward; a nation that meteth out and treadeth down,
whose land the rivers divide, to the place of the name of
the LORD of hosts, the mount Zion.

19 [R] The burden of Egypt.

tendrils and shoots. The anticipated and dreaded consummation never arrives. Assyria's warlike enterprises receive a sudden check. A ghastly picture is presented of mountain vultures and land animals battening over summer and winter upon the bodies of slaughtered Assyrian warriors.

Verse **7** looks like a later prosaic addition[1] in which the phrases of verse 2 are repeated. As a result of the Assyrian overthrow predicted by the prophet, the Ethiopians are deeply impressed by the power of Yahweh, God of Israel, and bring presents to His sacred abode in Zion.

CHAPTER XIX.

Yahweh will make a descent upon Egypt, and strike consternation among both the idol-deities and the inhabitants of the land. Civil war will break out. The people will have recourse to witchcraft, and will be delivered over to the tyranny of a cruel despot (verses 1–4). The system of Nile irrigation will cease and industries languish (verses 5–10). The boasted wisdom of the ruling classes will utterly fail (11–15). Yahweh and Judah will be dreaded by Egypt (10, 17). Five cities shall speak the Hebrew language, and an altar shall be erected to Yahweh, who manifests His power as a deliverer of the oppressed, so that the Egyptians come to know Him and offer Him worship (18–22). Egypt and Assyria then become united in the bonds of intercourse

---

[1] Zeph. iii. 10, which all recent critics regard as post-exilian, may indeed have inspired this closing verse in Isa. xviii, as Duhm suggests. It certainly presents a very close parallel.

[PE] Behold, the Lord rideth upon a swift cloud, and

---

and of the worship of Yahweh, Israel forming the mediating link, God's inheritance (23–25).

A certain progress of ideas seems to govern this chapter. The anarchic state of the country, which the Divine purpose inflicts on Egypt, closes in the recognition of His power. The tyranny of the despot gives place to the rule of Yahweh, and the union of the three kingdoms, Assyria, Israel, and Egypt, in one universal Divine empire.

But a closer examination of style and contents reveals a marked difference between verses 1–15 and those that follow. The former possess a certain poetical character, and evidently constitute a continuous whole. On the other hand, the latter are prosaic, and form a series of fragments introduced by the formula 'in that day.'

(1) The first fifteen verses describe the evils which Yahweh will inflict upon Egypt. The realm will be distracted by internecine conflicts. A cruel ruler and strong despot will rule over them. Various calamities will destroy the prosperity of the country, and the people will have recourse to the grossest superstition.

To what period of Egypt's history do these verses refer? The condition of internal weakness and disunion here depicted might indeed be regarded as representing the state of Egypt in the latter half of the eighth century B. C. down to 708, and it would be possible to identify the 'cruel lord' with Sargon at some time between the years 720 and 711 B. C. In other words, we might think of Egypt in the period of the twenty-third and twenty-fourth dynasties, when the country was governed by a number of petty princes of Libyan descent whom the Ethiopian king Pianchi endeavoured at an earlier period to subdue. We might therefore naturally assume that Isaiah, who was profoundly conscious of Egypt's weakness at this period (xx. 3, 4, xxx. 2–5, xxxi. 1–3), was the author of this section of the chapter. But there are reasons which weigh strongly against this conclusion. The Hebrew vocabulary is not that of Isaiah. In Dillmann-Kittel's commentary a series of words and phrases are noted in verses 5–10 which are strange to the diction of our prophet. The rhythm and metre drag; the style lacks vigour and originality. On these grounds we must assign this section to a much later period. It was probably composed in post-exilian times, in the days of the Persian supremacy, when Egypt suffered from internal weakness and was compelled to submit to the hard rule of Cambyses or Xerxes.

(2) The remainder of the chapter (16–25) consists of a number

cometh unto Egypt: and the idols of Egypt shall be moved at his presence, and the heart of Egypt shall melt

of detached fragments. (*a*) Verses 16, 17 continue the strain of evil denounced against Egypt. An added terror to Egypt will be the land of Judah. The phraseology of verse 17 clearly shows that it belongs to a later time than that of Isaiah, when Judah was hostile to Egypt. (*b*) Verse 18 points to a time when the Jewish population on the Nile had enormously increased, and the language of Canaan (or Hebrew) was spoken. This was probably in the Persian period, before Hebrew had given place to Greek and Aramaic. This consideration seems to be fatal to Duhm's hypothesis that verses 16–25 arose subsequent to 160 B. C., and is a glorification of the temple of Leontopolis. (*c*) Verses 19–22 probably belong to the pre-exilian period, and may have been written by Isaiah. In the Book of Deuteronomy there are strict injunctions against offering sacrifices, or erecting a pillar (*maṣṣēbah*) in *any* spot, since the temple of Jerusalem was the only legitimate place of worship (Deut. xii. 5, xvi. 5, 11, 16, xvii. 8). At that time (622 B. C.) the high-places throughout Judah were suppressed, and the erection of the pillar was expressly forbidden (xvi. 22). From that time forth Israel hardly ever conceived the possibility of sacrificial worship outside the confines of Judah, or indeed beyond those of Jerusalem[1]. There is little in this brief section that hinders the assumption that it was written by Isaiah. Even the expression (in verse 21) *zebaḥ uminḥah*, rendered 'sacrifice and oblation' (A. V. and R. V.), does not necessarily point to the later period, when *minḥah* meant the meal-offering in contradistinction to the *zebaḥ* which signified the slaughtered animal offering. In pre-exilian times this severe distinction did not hold, and *minḥah* simply denoted the sacrificial tribute or gift, whether animal or vegetable (Gen. iv. 4, 5 [J]; 1 Sam. ii. 17, xxvi. 19; Jer. xiv. 12). The combination of the two expressions is quite possible in a pre-exilian document, as Amos v. 25 clearly testifies. Previous to 622 B. C. (the date of the Deuteronomic reformation in the days of Josiah) altar and pillar were erected throughout Israel for the worship of Yahweh the national Deity, and the erection of such a sanctuary in Egypt, or at the frontier between Egypt and Judah, would have awakened no misgiving. Egypt at the close of the eighth century (as in the days of

---

[1] The irregularities referred to in Josephus, *Antiq.* xiii. 3, when Onias built a temple in Egypt, are merely the record of what was exceptional and sporadic, and cannot be erected into a basis for serious argument in dealing with the question of the age and authorship of this section. See remarks on verse 19.

in the midst of it. And I will stir up the Egyptians 2
against the Egyptians: and they shall fight every one
against his brother, and every one against his neighbour;
city against city, *and* kingdom against kingdom. And 3
the spirit of Egypt shall be made void in the midst of it;
and I will destroy the counsel thereof: and they shall
seek unto the idols, and to the charmers, and to them

Jeremiah, see below note on verse 18) was no doubt filled with exiles from Israel and Judah who took refuge in that country during the troubled times of Assyrian invasions, from the days of Tiglath-Pileser to those of Sennacherib (cf. Hos. ix. 3, 6). The spirit of this brief section is in harmony with the large spiritual outlook of the prophet in his closing years reflected in ii. 2–4, xi. 1–9.

(*d*) The closing fragments of this chapter (verses 23 foll.) belong to a much later time. Probably we may assign them to the Greek period, which immediately followed the death of Alexander. About 320 B. C. Egypt and a portion of Syria became the kingdom ruled over by Ptolemy Lagi. Moreover, we know from Egyptian inscriptions that Syria was called by the name Assyria in those days[1], and it is probable that we should understand the name Assyria in these verses in this sense.

1. The image of Yahweh riding upon a swift cloud resembles the conception of Yahweh riding upon the cherub (*K^{e}rûb*) in the storm-theophany of Ps. xviii. 10 (11 Heb.).

2. stir up: more accurately 'spur on.' We have the same verb in the original in ix. 11 (10 Heb.), where it is similarly rendered.

3. made void: more literally 'shall be emptied out.' The word for **spirit** here (Heb. *rûaḥ*) simply conveys with greater intensity or energy the ordinary mental functions expressed by 'mind,' 'heart,' 'soul' (*lēbh* and *néfesh*). The national energies of the Egyptians seemed paralysed owing to this Divine visitation. There were several periods in the internal history of Egypt when the kingdom was thus enfeebled by discord. In these conditions of dire national peril, the Egyptians had recourse to the sorcery and necromancy which had prevailed in Egypt for millenniums. See articles 'Magic,' 'Sooth-saying,' and 'Sorcery' in Hastings *DB.*

---

[1] Brugsch, *Gesch.*, p. 218; Pape, *Wörterbuch der Griech. Eigennamen*, p. 162; Stade, *Zeitsch. für die A-T-liche Wissensch.*, 1882, p. 291 foll.; cited by Dillmann-Kittel in the commentary on *Isaiah* (sixth ed.), p. 171.

4 that have familiar spirits, and to the wizards. And I will
give over the Egyptians into the hand of a cruel lord;
and a fierce king shall rule over them, saith the Lord,
5 the LORD of hosts. And the waters shall fail from the
6 sea, and the river shall be wasted and become dry. And
the rivers shall stink; the streams of Egypt shall be
minished and dried up: the reeds and flags shall wither
7 away. The meadows by the Nile, by the brink of the
Nile, and all that is sown by the Nile, shall become dry,
8 be driven away, and be no more. The fishers also shall
lament, and all they that cast angle into the Nile shall
mourn, and they that spread nets upon the waters shall
9 languish. Moreover they that work in combed flax, and
10 they that weave white cloth, shall be ashamed. And her

---

4. The 'hard, despotic lord' may have been Cambyses, or perhaps Xerxes. See introductory remarks to this chapter.

5. **shall fail:** more exactly 'shall be dried up.'

6. The words rendered **rivers** and also **streams** should be understood in the sense of the canals and watercourses, with which the region of the Nile was endowed from the early days of its civilization. According to Herodotus, ii. 108, Rameses II (Sesōstris, circ. 1300 B.C.) was a great constructor of canals; see Sir G. Wilkinson's *Manners and Customs of the Ancient Egyptians*, i. p. 70, ii. pp. 365, 387 foll. But in the later and degenerate days of Egypt's history, portrayed in this passage, these irrigation works had fallen into neglect, and the canals became dried up.

7. The LXX rendering shows that it is hardly probable that we have the correct text in our Hebrew version at the opening of this verse. It is extremely hazardous to attempt to restore the original. Instead of **brink** we should probably render 'mouth,' with Delitzsch, Dillmann, and Kittel.

8. The fishing industry becomes affected in this time of national supineness and decay. Respecting fishing with nets in ancient Egypt, see Wilkinson's *Manners and Customs of the Ancient Egyptians*, i. pp. 291 foll., with representations of the drag-net.

9. Relying on the rendering of Pesh. and Vulg., Pinsker and Luzatto would slightly emend the text of the latter part of the verse, and render 'female combers and male weavers have turned pale,' through the cessation of their industry amid the universal national decline. This is not improbably the correct reading.

pillars shall be broken in pieces, all they that work for
hire *shall be* grieved in soul. The princes of Zoan are 11
utterly foolish; the counsel of the wisest counsellors of
Pharaoh is become brutish: how say ye unto Pharaoh, I
am the son of the wise, the son of ancient kings? Where 12
then are thy wise men? and let them tell thee now; and
let them know what the LORD of hosts hath purposed
concerning Egypt. The princes of Zoan are become 13
fools, the princes of Noph are deceived; they have
caused Egypt to go astray, that are the corner stone of
her tribes. The LORD hath mingled a spirit of perverse- 14

---

10. The pillars (or foundations: cf. Ps. xi. 3) refer to the leaders of society, who are the pillars of the state; cf. Gal. ii. 9. The ancient Hebrews were prone to describe their leaders, or rulers, by these metaphors, such as 'tent-peg,' which keeps the tent fixed in its position, Zech. x. 4; 'shield,' Ps. xlvii. 10 (used in reference to God in Gen. xv. 1; Ps. iii. 3, xviii. 2, 30).

11. Render: 'Only fools are the princes of Zoan.' Zoan, rightly identified in LXX and Targ. with Tanis, was one of the most ancient cities of Egypt, and goes back, according to Max Müller (*Enc. Bibl.*), to the time of the sixth dynasty. This tradition of its ancient origin is reflected in Num. xiii. 22 (where the ancient origin of Hebron is emphasized by the statement that it was built seven years before Zoan). It is to be identified with the modern Ṣân, on the right bank of the Tanitic branch of the Nile, 'in a plain which is at present in summer a marshy prolongation of the Menzaleh lake, in winter a salt desert.'

13. *Nōph* here, as in Jer. ii. 16; Ezek. xxx. 13, is the *Mōph* of Hos. ix. 6, i. e. Memphis, the celebrated capital of Lower Egypt from the earliest times, situated on the left bank of the Nile just before it branches into the numerous arms of the Delta. We here have the same kind of metaphor as above in verse 10. The pinnacle (rather than **corner stone**) of a house ('battlement'), in Hebrew *pinnah*, is used here as a collective expression to designate the heads of the tribes. By the **tribes** we are to understand the *nomes* into which Egypt was divided, and whose rivalries and insurrectionary movements were a fruitful cause of internal weakness, to which reference is made above in verse 2. The rendering of the R. V. requires to be amended to make it intelligible: 'Egypt the heads of her nomes have led astray,' i. e. Egypt is betrayed to her ruin by her so-called leaders.

ness in the midst of her: and they have caused Egypt to go astray in every work thereof, as a drunken man
15 staggereth in his vomit. Neither shall there be for Egypt any work, which head or tail, palm-branch or rush, may do.

16 In that day shall Egypt be like unto women: and it shall tremble and fear because of the shaking of the hand
17 of the LORD of hosts, which he shaketh over it. And the land of Judah shall become a terror unto Egypt, every one to whom mention is made thereof shall be afraid, because of the purpose of the LORD of hosts, which he purposeth against it.

18 In that day there shall be five cities in the land of

---

14. in every work thereof: i. e. 'in all its doing'; the latter would be a preferable rendering. For **staggereth** it would be better to read (with R. V. marg.) 'goeth astray,' since the same verb is employed in the Hebrew as in the preceding clause.

15. Once more we meet with metaphors resembling in character those of verses 10 and 13. The phraseology seems to be borrowed from ix. 13. The metaphors represent all the varying ranks of society, and may have been proverbial.

Verses 16-25. We now come to the series of prophetic fragments, all bearing upon the destiny of Egypt. On verses 16 and 17 see introductory remarks to this chapter. The situation is evidently one of hostility between Egypt and Judah, the former feeling dread of the latter. It is extremely difficult to fix historically the situation here described. It evidently belongs to post-exilian times, when Egyptian power had sunk to a low ebb. The unusual and Aramaic form of the word for **terror** (verse 17) clearly points to this conclusion.

18. Another fragment succeeds, evidently belonging to the post-exilian period, viz. the days of the Persian domination, when Hebrew still continued to be the **language of Canaan** and a large number of Jews had settled in the Egyptian towns. Even in the days of Jeremiah a vast number had fled for refuge to Egypt (Jer. xlii. 14, xliv)[1], and the number had probably been

---

[1] Duhm in his commentary on Jer. xliv. 1 doubts this, but historical probabilities are all in its favour. Already, in the days of Hosea (ix. 3, 6), there was a drift of Hebrew population to Egypt.

Egypt that speak the language of Canaan, and swear to the Lord of hosts; one shall be called The city of destruction.

---

greatly augmented in the exilian period. Hitzig even ventures to name the five cities as Heliopolis, Leontopolis, Migdol, Daphne, and Memphis. Two of these towns specially mentioned in Jer. xliv. 1, viz. *Migdol* (cf. xlvi. 14 and Ezek. xxix. 10) or Magdolon near Pelusium, which Max Müller (in *Enc. Bibl.*) identifies with Tell es Semût, and *Môph* or *Memphis* (see above, on verse 13), might be included among these five which the prophet here had in his mind and Hitzig specifies (cf. Hos. ix. 6). We might also accept another town in Hitzig's list, viz. *Daphne*, if we can identify this place with the *Taḥpanḥēs* of Jer. xliv. 1 (see Max Müller, article 'Tahpanhes' in *Enc. Bibl.*). It is perilous to go further than this.

The city of destruction—the name given to one of the cities—has been a fruitful subject of controversy. The Hebrew original Heres (A. V. and R. V. marg.) is a substantive which is found only in this passage, and, according to the meaning of the corresponding Semitic verb (Hebrew and Arabic, also Moabite Stone, l. 27) which is specially used of destroying walls, houses, and towns, would naturally have the meaning which is assigned to it, 'destruction[1].' But the reading is doubtful, and several alternatives lie before us.

(1) Sixteen Hebrew MSS. contain the reading sustained by the versions Symm., Vulg., and the Targ., as well as the Jewish commentator Saadia, viz. Ḥeres 'sun' (Judges xiv. 18; Job ix. 7) instead of Heres. The orthographic change is of the slightest. Accordingly we render: 'City of the Sun,' i. e. Heliopolis. This is the interpretation adopted by Hitzig and supported by Cheyne, and certainly possesses considerable claim to probability. This city was celebrated for its temple of the Sun, whence its Greek name. Its Semitic name Ôn (Assyrian *Unu* in Ašurbanipal's inscription) was based on the original Egyptian name. 'On-Heliopolis, situated very near the southern end of the Delta, east of the Pelusiac branch of the Nile, was perhaps the oldest city of Egypt' (article 'On' in *Enc. Bibl.*).

---

[1] We put aside the interpretation 'lion,' suggested by the Arabic epithet of a lion (*hâris*, participle of *harasa* 'devour'). On this far-fetched view of the meaning is based the identification of this city with *Leontopolis* (so Duhm and Marti). Yet it was not to this verse but to the following that Onias IV appealed, as will be shown in the commentary on verse 19.

19 [**I?**] In that day shall there be an altar to the LORD in the midst of the land of Egypt, and a pillar at the

---

If we adopt this reading we must regard it as most probable that this verse originated in Egypt rather than Palestine.

(2) Another reading is suggested to us by the LXX, in whose text there stood 'city of righteousness.' The LXX reading proves that in the original text there stood the Hebrew word for righteousness (*ṣedeḳ*). In later times an Egyptian scribe altered this word to *ḥeres* in allusion to Heliopolis. Subsequent copyists, actuated by hostile feelings to the Egyptian community, altered this word to *ḥerem*, 'curse,' or *heres*, 'destruction.' This seems to us the most probable theory of the genesis of the different readings.

Verses 19–22 constitute a pre-exilian, not improbably an Isaianic fragment, at all events pre-Deuteronomic (see introductory remarks to this chapter).

19. at the border: more correctly '*beside* or *close to* the border.' To this verse (not to verse 18) Onias appealed in support of his project for erecting a temple at Leontopolis in the days of Ptolemy Philometor, and with his sanction (160 B. C.). The Deuteronomic legislation (623 B. C.) and that of the Priestly Code (B. C. 500–400), which presupposes the former, prohibited such an enterprise, since Jerusalem was the only legitimate centre of worship. Onias therefore based his claim upon a passage earlier than both the above-mentioned codes. This certainly seems the most natural conclusion which we can draw, when we remember that not only the Jews from Jerusalem, but also the Samaritans who worshipped in Mount Gerizim, viewed this new Egyptian sanctuary with feelings of bitter hostility (Josephus, *Bell. Jud.*, vii. 10. 3; *Antiq.* xiii. 3. 4).

And yet Duhm propounds the extraordinary theory that this entire section, verses 16–25, was inserted about this time (160 B. C.) in Isaiah's oracles. How this was possible under the conditions above described, and how these verses 19–22 could have been permanently accepted as an integral part of Scripture, it is difficult to imagine. But by Duhm this difficulty is not felt, for he boldly proceeds to erect a large inference upon his theory, as though it were a clearly demonstrated fact. 'The *fact* that an oracle composed after 160 B. C. could find its way into the Book of Isaiah is for every unprejudiced student a certain proof that this book was compiled at a late date.'

The **pillar** here is not to be regarded merely as monumental, and therefore not possessing a religious significance, i. e. as the Hebrew equivalent for the Egyptian obelisk (so Kittel and

border thereof to the LORD. And it shall be for a sign 20
and for a witness unto the LORD of hosts in the land of
Egypt: for they shall cry unto the LORD because of the
oppressors, and he shall send them a saviour, and a de-
fender, and he shall deliver them. And the LORD shall 21
be known to Egypt, and the Egyptians shall know the
LORD in that day; yea, they shall worship with sacrifice
and oblation, and shall vow a vow unto the LORD, and
shall perform it. And the LORD shall smite Egypt, smiting 22
and healing; and they shall return unto the LORD, and
he shall be intreated of them, and shall heal them.

Skinner, cf. Jer. xliii. 13), but as the *stone-symbol of deity*. That it was intended here to have a religious significance is clear from the preceding parallel clause in which the *altar* is mentioned.

20. If we assign these verses to the prophet Isaiah, we may regard them as referring to the same conditions as those to which xviii. 4-6 allude. The **oppressors** therefore would obviously apply to the Assyrians from whom God would deliver the Egyptians.

Instead of **for they shall cry** render 'when they cry.' 'When they cry, He will send them a deliverer, and He will contend and deliver them.' The form *rāb*, rendered 'great (mighty) one' in A. V. and R. V. (marg.), should be treated as a verb and translated 'contend' or 'combat.'

21. For **be known** read with R. V. marg. 'make Himself known.' Disciplinary chastisement shall work a moral restoration. The smiting shall result in healing (verse 22).

Verses 23 foll. belong to a much later period; see introductory remarks to this chapter. The standpoint is wholly different from that of verses 16, 17, where the attitude of Judah to Egypt was intensely hostile and Yahweh shakes his hand over the latter (contrast verse 24). It equally differs from that of verses 19–22, where Egypt is described as suffering from oppressors and cries for deliverance, which is to be vouchsafed after a period of disciplinary chastisement and moral renewal ('they shall return unto the Lord'). In verses 23 foll., on the other hand, we are placed under conditions of assured peace in Egypt under the Greek dominion of one of the successors of Alexander. Not improbably these verses emanated from an Egyptian Jew.

23 **[PE]** In that day shall there be a high way out of Egypt to Assyria, and the Assyrian shall come into Egypt, and the Egyptian into Assyria; and the Egyptians shall worship with the Assyrians.

24 In that day shall Israel be the third with Egypt and
25 with Assyria, a blessing in the midst of the earth: for that the LORD of hosts hath blessed them, saying, Blessed be Egypt my people, and Assyria the work of my hands, and Israel mine inheritance.

---

23. The Hebrew would seem to favour the rendering 'the Egyptians shall serve Assyria,' and this interpretation is given by LXX, Pesh., Vulg., as well as Targ., and in modern times by the commentator Hitzig. It would be impossible, however, to assign any definite meaning to such a clause under the historic conditions of post-exilian times, when Assyria as an empire had disappeared, and when, as has been indicated above (p. 229 and footnote), it became the name for Syria in Egyptian documents at the close of the fourth century B. C. Moreover, in verse 24 Egypt, Israel, and Syria stand on an equal footing. Accordingly the only possible rendering is that of A. V. and R. V. 'shall serve [Yahweh] *with* Assyria' [= Syria].

24. For **with Egypt and with Assyria** read 'unto (*or* for) Egypt and unto (*or* for) Assyria.' *Israel* (in verse 17 we only read of *Judah*), though it shares its privileges and titles with Egypt and Syria, still retains the pre-eminent position of being both the spiritual as well as the physical bond of union. The *latter* it had been for many centuries, for Palestine was the natural highway of commerce as well as of war between north and south as well as between north-east and south-west (see article 'War' in *Enc. Bibl.*, *ad init.*), on account of its geographical position and comparative fertility. But the *former* it was not destined to become till long after the Exile. It was the Deutero-Isaiah who first heralded Israel's great vocation of being 'a light unto the Gentiles, to be God's salvation unto the earth's bound' (xlix. 6)[1]. It is through Christianity that this great vocation is being fulfilled and the religion of Yahweh is rescued from the trammels of nationalism and established as a universal religion. 'The way' began in Jerusalem (Acts i. 8: cf. verse 4).

---

[1] Yet even this was but an echo, or rather a clearer and fuller presentation, of conceptions found in the pre-exilian Yahwistic writer of Gen. xii. 3, xxvi. 4 and the Isaianic utterance in Isa. ii. 2-4.

[I] In the year that Tartan came unto Ashdod, when **20** Sargon the king of Assyria sent him, and he fought

---

CHAPTER XX.

We now come again to a genuine record of the prophet himself or one of his immediate disciples, describing (like viii. 1–4) a symbolic act which he was commanded by Yahweh to perform and whose prophetic significance is explained. The date is clearly fixed for us by the opening verse and by the discovery of Sargon's annals. The capture of Ashdod, to which verse 1 refers, is recorded in Sargon's great Khorsabad inscription (*Botta* 149. 6 foll.), in which he describes the seizure of the town from Azuri, an obstinate enemy of Assyrian rule and a centre of disaffection. See Schrader's *Cuneiform Inscriptions and the O. T.*, vol. ii. pp. 89 foll. (The passage may be found in Schrader's *Keilinschriftliche Bibliothek*, vol. ii. pp. 65–67; ll. 90–109 from the great Khorsabad inscription, which is there transcribed in its entirety.) From Sargon's inscription we learn that not only Ashdod but also Gath was taken and plundered by the Assyrian soldiery. This event we are able to fix with precision in the year 711 B. C.

This is the only occasion when Sargon's name is mentioned in the O. T. He is called *Šarrukîn* in the Assyrian language, reigned from 722 to 705 B. C., and was one of the greatest military leaders that Assyria ever produced[1].

---

[1] The cuneiform records call him the later or 'second' Sargon (*Šarrukîn arku*), i.e. Sargon II, to distinguish him from Sargon I the king of Accad, who reigned circ. 3800 B.C. The name means '[God] has established the king' = Šar-ukîn, rather than Šarru kînu = 'Firm (steadfast) is the king' (Schrader, *Cuneiform Inscriptions*, &c., ii. p. 83). A brief conspectus of the chief events of his reign will be found in *KAT.*^{3} (given by Winckler), pp. 63–75. Respecting Philistia and the events 713–11 B.C., see pp. 68 foll. There is a discrepancy in reference to the date of the overthrow of Ashdod in the different cuneiform documents. According to the annals the overthrow of the insurrectionary movement of Azuri king of Ashdod took place in the eleventh year of Sargon's reign, but according to the fragments of a clay prism which have been discovered, this occurred in the ninth year. The Assyrians were specially careful in marking dates by their eponyms in the official canons of rulers (see Introduction, p. 79 foll.). Accordingly an attempt has been made to reconcile the two traditions, by referring them to the two dates for Sargon's accession. His *actual* accession took place in 722–1 B.C., but the *official* year of his accession was reckoned from his eponym-year in 719 B. C. Thus in both traditions the year 711 B.C. for Ashdod's overthrow is intended. Winckler, on the other hand, thinks that the difference arises because

2 against Ashdod and took it; at that time the LORD spake by Isaiah the son of Amoz, saying, Go, and loose the sackcloth from off thy loins, and put thy shoe from off thy foot. And he did so, walking naked and bare-
3 foot. And the LORD said, Like as my servant Isaiah hath walked naked and barefoot three years for a sign

---

1. The word **Tartan** is a Hebrew loan-word, an official military title borrowed from the Assyrian language. The Assyrian word *turtânu* means the commander-in-chief, and his official position ranked next to that of the king, for in the lists of eponym-officials who in Assyria gave the name to the year, we find that of the *turtânu* (or *tartânu*) coming next to that of the king. Cuneiform scholars regard the form *turtânu* as more correct: see Schrader, *Cuneiform Inscriptions and the O. T.*, vol. i. p. 262 footnote, and glossary in vol. ii; cf. *KAT.*^{3}, p. 273 footnote 3. The word is never employed in the O. T. except to designate the *Assyrian* military commander-in-chief, just as in English 'Kaiser' is only used to designate a *German* emperor. Cf. 2 Kings xviii. 17, the only other passage where it occurs.

2. It is not necessary to regard this parenthesis as a later and editorial interpolation. Some statement like this is necessary in order to explain verse 3. The expression **at that time** must not be pressed too strictly, and corresponds to the beginning of the three or less preliminary years before the final overthrow in 711 B.C.

The **sackcloth** means in the original a garment made of some hairy material. It was the garb assumed by ascetics and those who pursued the prophetic calling. It was placed around the loins (as here and 1 Kings xx. 32), and was especially worn as a sign of mourning (Isa. iii. 24, &c.). Of course the expression **naked** can only be understood in a relative sense, as in John xxi. 7. The word is employed to mean that the outer garment was not worn, but only the upper tunic or *kuttoneth* corresponding to the Greek *chitôn* (see *Primer of Hebrew Antiquities*, pp. 45 foll.).

3. The rendering of A. V. and R. V. 'sign and wonder' is in accordance with the undoubted meaning of the original in Deut. iv. 34, vii. 19, &c., where the two substantives are combined in

---

the reference of the clay prism is to the *beginning* of the effort to suppress the insurrectionary movement, and of the annals to its *final overthrow*. The insurrection lasted altogether three years, which the prophet spent 'naked and barefoot' (xx. 3); see *KAT.*^{3}, p. 69 foll., and cf. Winckler's *Alttestamentliche Untersuchungen*, pp. 142 foll.

and a wonder upon Egypt and upon Ethiopia; so shall 4
the king of Assyria lead away the captives of Egypt, and
the exiles of Ethiopia, young and old, naked and barefoot,
and with buttocks uncovered, to the shame of Egypt. 5
And they shall be dismayed and ashamed, because of
Ethiopia their expectation, and of Egypt their glory.

---

the plural. This rendering is given here by the LXX. But the latter substantive (*môphēth*) is here, as well as in Isa. viii. 18, Zech. iii. 8, more correctly translated 'premonition' or 'type.' Accordingly translate here: 'sign and *premonition* concerning Egypt and concerning Ethiopia.'

4. The indignity here described scarcely ever meets us portrayed on Egyptian monuments, and scarcely ever on Assyrian. It is obviously something rare and exceptional.

5. *Cûsh*, which is the **expectation** (or 'hope') of the revolting Philistine towns, has been usually identified with Ethiopia; while the word in the original, *Misraim*, **their glory** (or 'pride'), has been regarded as the name for Egypt. It would not be safe to abandon this view for that which has within recent years been advanced with considerable ingenuity by Winckler and advocated in the *KAT.*³, p. 71, that Miṣraim here is to be identified with a North-Arabian territory called Muṣrân[1] (= Midian) lying close to Edom, while Cûsh lay south of this in the western portion of Arabia (see the remarks in the Introduction upon this theory of Winckler, footnote, p. 17 foll.). Egypt was at this time weak through internal disorders, and was therefore a feeble prop for Philistine rebels against Assyrian domination to rest upon (xxxi. 1-3; cf. xxxvi. 6). Nevertheless there were signs visible of a recovery of strength in Egypt, and in a few years the advent of the twenty-fifth or Ethiopian dynasty under Shabako (circ. 708 B.C.) began to raise hopes among the Palestinian population (see article 'Egypt' in *Enc. Bibl.*)[2].

---

[1] See Hommel, *Aufsätze u. Abhandlungen*, iii. p. 306. This writer is a dangerous ally, and goes far beyond Winckler in his identifications of the Hebrew name for Egypt (Miṣraim) and of Ethiopia (Cûsh) with regions in North-Western Arabia. The list of passages to which Winckler applies his theory is given by him in *KAT.*³, pp. 146, 147.

[2] In a parallel account of the campaign against Ashdod derived from the fragments discovered by Geo. Smith of a prism inscription we read: 'The people of Philistia, Judah, and Moab, who dwell by the sea, tributary to Ashur, my lord, plotted hostilities . . . . in order to raise

6 And the inhabitant of this coastland shall say in that day, Behold, such is our expectation, whither we fled for help to be delivered from the king of Assyria: and we, how shall we escape?

21 [R] The burden of the wilderness of the sea.

---

6. The word **inhabitant** (singular) is a literal rendering. It is, however, employed as a collective term for 'inhabitants.' The 'inhabitants of the coastland' was a phrase used in current parlance for all the peoples of this Palestinian region, including those of Judah, Edom, and Moab, as well as Philistia. The prophet therefore obviously includes his own countrymen. Kittel cites an apposite passage from the fragment of a prism inscription of Sargon (see footnote) which speaks of the allies of Jamani of Ashdod, viz. Philistines, Jews, Edomites, and Moabites, as 'dwellers by the sea' (ll. 29, 30. The citation is given in Schrader, *KIB.*, ii. p. 64, footnote). All these peoples who looked to Egypt and Ethiopia for support will find their expectations illusory.

Chapter XXI.

Oracle on the doom of Babylon (verses 1-10). Attempts have been made by commentators in recent times to vindicate the Isaianic origin of this passage on the basis of the Assyrian inscriptions. The capture of Babylon to which this oracle refers

---

enmity against me, brought their gifts of homage (?) to Piru king of Musri, a prince who could not deliver them . .' See *KIB.*, ii. pp. 64 foll. (footnote), and Winckler's *Keilschrifttexte Sargon's*, pp. 188 foll. Here the Piru, king of Musri, is evidently the ruler of the North-Arabian territory, probably the same *Pir'u* who is mentioned along with other Arabian potentates as tributary to Sargon in the great Khorsabad inscription, l. 27. (Sib'i or *Seveh* was his commander-in-chief.) This passage is important as showing that Judah was then co-operating with other Palestinian states in throwing off the yoke of Assyria. But it is difficult to say how far it was involved. No serious consequences to Ḥezekiah followed. It is obvious that the policy of Aḥaz was no longer sustained with the same vigour. Probably Ḥezekiah's movements at this time were cautious. In our opinion it would be an error to identify the reference of Isaiah's oracle with the negotiations which were carried on with the North-Arabian ruler; and also an error to exaggerate the significance of the reference to Judah in the above-cited fragment. Probably the capture of Ashdod warned Ḥezekiah how far he might go in abandoning the policy of his father.

[**Ex.**] As whirlwinds in the South sweep through, it cometh from the wilderness, from a terrible land. A 2

---

has been identified with the conquest of that city by Sargon in 710–709 B.C., which ended in the 'dethronement as well as imprisonment of Merodach-Baladan its king, and the destruction by fire of the city Dûr-Jakîn into which he had betaken himself for refuge' (*COT.*, ii. p. 25. A vivid and full description of these operations in the campaign against Merodach-Baladan is given in the *Keilinsch. Bibliothek*, vol. ii. p. 68 foll.; ll. 122–44 in the great Khorsabad inscription). But there are serious objections to this identification, since (1) in verse 2 Elam and Media are represented as the foes of Babylon who bring about its downfall, but the conditions in the year 710 were utterly different. Sargon was the relentless foe, while Elam was the ally and not the enemy of Merodach-Baladan, who, as we learn from the Khorsabad inscription, l. 123, 'had summoned Ḫumbanigash of Elam to his aid.' On the other hand, not a syllable is said about Assyria in this prophetic oracle. (2) The language can scarcely be regarded as Isaianic. It is true that a few expressions are those of the prophet Isaiah, yet there are others which are unquestionably strange to his vocabulary.

The historic situation here presupposed is obviously that of 549–539 B.C., the decennium when Cyrus was rapidly extending his dominion to the east of Babylonia. Cyrus had already established his power in Anshân or the north-east part of Elam, and in 549 had conquered Media. We have already shown on xiii. 17 that the Medes acquired great historic importance in the sixth century. Like the Persians they were Indo-Germanic, and took part in the capture of Babylon in 538 B.C.

1. The superscription to the oracle is very enigmatic, like the other superscriptions in this chapter. It is difficult to determine what 'oracle respecting the sea-desert' can mean. In the cuneiform inscriptions South Babylonia was called 'land of the sea' (*mât Tiâmtim*), since it was situated near the Persian Gulf. Babylon itself, including its district (North Babylonia), was not so named. Perhaps, indeed, the prophet uses the expression (which may have been current among the Jews in exile) to include North as well as South Babylonia. There is much uncertainty, however, as to the original text. The LXX omit all reference to **sea**, and appear not to have had the original Hebrew word for it in heir texts. Its omission, however, does not make the sense any learer. Perhaps we ought to take the word **wilderness** or desert' as standing in apposition to the word 'oracle.' 'The racle "desert"' might then have reference to the word 'wilderess' or 'desert' which occurs early in the oracle. We frequently

R

grievous vision is declared unto me; the treacherous dealer dealeth treacherously, and the spoiler spoileth. Go up, O Elam; besiege, O Media; all the sighing thereof have
3 I made to cease. Therefore are my loins filled with

---

meet with sections of the O. T., especially in the Pentateuch, which are specially designated by some striking word which comes in the first verse. The names in Hebrew of the several books of the Pentateuch as well as of the Sabbath portions (read in the synagogue and called *Parshiyyôth*), which are indicated in our Hebrew Bibles, are all designated from the initial words or some characteristic expression in the opening verse. Render the opening verse :—

> 'As whirlwinds—in the south sweeping on,
> From the desert it comes—from a terrible land.'

The word for the **South** or 'South country' is in the original *negebh*, and is a term which specially designates the land south of Palestine (called by the ancient Egyptians *negbu*). The writer of this oracle evidently speaks from the experience of a Palestinian inhabitant who knew well what these storms blowing up from the south or land of Edom (Zech. ix. 14: cf. Judges v. 4 and Hab. iii. 3) actually were. The 'desert' here has been taken to mean the Syrian desert which intervenes between Babylonia and Canaan. Beyond the desert lies Babylonia, 'the terrible land'—terrible on account of the scenes which are shortly to be enacted there. This is the view adopted by Duhm and Marti (and previously by Nägelsbach and Orelli). There are, however, commentators who hold that the Hebrew word for 'desert' (or wilderness) here means the level country lying south-east of the Tigris which separates Elam from Babylonia. This seems more in consonance with the known facts of history, for this was the direction from which the conquerors of Babylon actually came (so Kittel and Skinner).

2. The most idiomatic rendering would be : 'As a vision grim 'twas announced to me' (Marti). What follows is the utterance of Yahweh through the lips of the prophet-seer. The expression **sighing thereof**, or 'mourning over it,' is the correct rendering of the Hebrew original, but the meaning is vague, and attempts have been made to reconstruct the text. We gain no assistance in this direction from the LXX, who seem to have translated a corrupted text. It would, therefore, be wisest to adhere to our Hebrew original, and to understand the 'mourning over it' to be the lamentation over the destruction of Babylon to which the entire passage evidently bears reference. Even the voice of mourning is stilled in the universal silence of desolation.

anguish; pangs have taken hold upon me, as the pangs of a woman in travail: I am pained so that I cannot hear; I am dismayed so that I cannot see. My heart 4 panteth, horror hath affrighted me: the twilight that I desired hath been turned into trembling unto me. They 5 prepare the table, they set the watch, they eat, they drink: rise up, ye princes, anoint the shield. For thus 6 hath the Lord said unto me, Go, set a watchman; let

---

3. The **anguish** here is properly the cramping or convulsive pains of childbirth which the parallel clause clearly expresses. We note here a more sympathetic spirit among the Jews of Babylonia in the prospective downfall of the kingdom than that which is manifested in the Deutero-Isaiah. The range of vision exhibited in these verses is more contracted. The writer can see nothing beyond the ruins of Babylon. In the Deutero-Isaiah noble vistas for the Jewish race, the restored exile community, are disclosed. We are placed at a later stage in the historical development. The personality and policy of Cyrus are well known, as chap. xlv clearly shows.

4. **panteth:** better 'fainteth.' 'The twilight of my pleasure,' the cool evening with its refreshing breeze coming after the heat of the day, brings no solace with it, but only panic.

5. A vivid picture follows. We are somewhat reminded of the scenes of evening revelry, prolonged till dawn in the houses of the wealthy men of Jerusalem, portrayed by Isaiah in chap. v. 11. Cf. the earlier passage in Amos vi. 1 foll. descriptive of Samaria. But here we are transported to a different scene and time: Babylon in the year 545 B.C. or thereabouts. 'The table is set in array, the coverlet spread[1], there is eating and drinking.' But amid the revelry comes the warning cry, **Up, ye princes, anoint the shield.** The anointing of the shield with oil was to keep it bright and smooth (cf. 2 Sam. i. 21), perhaps in order to enable the arrows or darts of the enemy to glance off.

6. The word **For** evidently refers back to the 'stern' or 'grim vision' of verse 2, the contents of which are now given. There is no need to make any alteration in the punctuation of our Hebrew

---

[1] This is probably the correct rendering, and harmonizes best with the context. Targum and Peshiṭto translate 'They set the watch,' and are followed by Gesenius and Delitzsch. But this interpretation is not well adapted to the words that follow. The LXX omit the rendering of the two Hebrew words in question. See the useful illustrative footnote in Cheyne's *Introduction to Isaiah*, p. 126.

7 him declare what he seeth: and when he seeth a troop,
horsemen in pairs, a troop of asses, a troop of camels, he
8 shall hearken diligently with much heed. And he cried
as a lion: O Lord, I stand continually upon the watch-
tower in the day-time, and am set in my ward whole
9 nights: and, behold, here cometh a troop of men, horse-
men in pairs. And he answered and said, Babylon is

---

text, so as to render 'Take your stand as watchman,' as Buhl suggests, or 'Take your stand on the watch-tower,' as Stade proposes. We have here an example of the divided self of prophetic ecstasy of which Ezek. viii. 1-3, xi. 24 foll., furnish vivid examples. The other self is transported to some spot, where the scenes depicted in verses 7-9, which immediately follow, are conveyed to the passive or recipient self of the prophet who announces the vision he has beheld as the message he has heard from Yahweh (verse 10)[1].

7. For **troop** read 'cavalcade' (i.e. as the Hebrew word indicates, a procession of chariots and horsemen, as well as asses and camels, &c.). The seer beholds the advancing army of Medes and Elamites, who are about to attack Babylon.

8. The word **lion** in our Hebrew text is obviously due to corruption. Read, with Duhm: 'See, upon the watch-tower, Lord, I continuously stand by day; and on my sentry guard I take my stand through all the nights.'

9. Once more the procession of chariots, horsemen, riders on asses and camel-drivers, but this time it is a triumphal procession, and the message of doom goes forth, **Babylon is fallen!** This fallen, is fallen; and all the graven images of her gods are broken unto the ground. O thou my threshing, and 10 the corn of my floor: that which I have heard from the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, have I declared unto you.

---

[1] The language of verse 10, taken in connexion with verse 6 foll., render this view of the passage (which is that of Duhm and Marti) necessary as an adequate explanation. Kittel, however, rejects it, and urges that 'just as the king or general does not gain his information direct, but appoints a second subordinate person as watchman who conveys it to him (2 Sam. xviii. 24 foll.; 2 Kings ix. 17 foll.), so also the prophet in the vision'; this, however, reduces the entire passage to matter-of-fact prose, and verse 10 hardly seems in place. Kittel quotes Hab. ii. 1 foll. as a parallel, but in this oracle Ḥabaḳḳuḳ speaks of *himself* as the watchman and not of 'a second or subordinate person.' Lastly, Kittel argues that 'Isaiah does not know this form [i.e. the divided personality of ecstatic vision]; it is only the result of a prolonged prophetic refinement of practice (*Technik*).' This is hardly consistent with Kittel's express denial of Isaianic authorship on a previous page.

[**R**] The burden of Dumah. 11

---

passage finds its echo in Rev. xiv. 8, xviii. 2, where Babylon is typical of all anti-Christian influences. It was certainly the historic centre of magic practices. The destruction of the idol-images of the patron-deities of a nation was the natural corollary to the overthrow of the state over which they were lords and patrons (cf. Isa. ii. 20 foll., xlvi. 1 foll.).

10. Render: 'O my trodden one—child of my threshing-floor.' We have here the agricultural metaphor of the threshing-floor on which the corn was trodden out. As to the processes employed, see *Hebrew Antiquities* (R.T.S.), pp. 91 foll., and illustration. The simile was not infrequently employed to describe vividly the afflicted condition of a race: Mic. iv. 12 foll.; Isa. xli. 15; Jer. li. 33; cf. Amos i. 3, and 2 Kings xiii. 7.

The Oracle of Dumah (verses 11, 12). A brief and obscure oracle, whose obscurity partly arises from the brevity. The condition of Edom at the time appears to have been a dark one, but more than this we do not know. Are we to regard this section as belonging to the exilian period, just as the previous oracle? The Aramaisms which occur render it scarcely probable that it could have been composed by Isaiah. On the other hand, it does not therefore necessarily belong to the Exile period. It may have been composed earlier than the days of Isaiah, and, like chap. xv, have been adopted by him into the collection of his oracles (so Ewald). But this seems hardly probable, and the period of the Exile seems on the whole to be actually the time to which we ought to assign it [1].

---

[1] We might infer this from the fact to which Nöldeke draws attention (article 'Edom' in *Enc. Bibl.*), that the 'exilian and post-exilian prophets denounce the Edomites in no measured terms' (Ezek. xxv. 12–14, xxxv. 14, xxxvi. 3; Obad.; Lam. iv. 21; Isa. xxxiv, lxiii. 1–6; Ps. cxxxvii. 7; Mal. 1. 2–5). This was largely owing to the attitude of Edom when Judah was overthrown by Nebuchadnezzar, and Judaean territory was occupied by the Edomites.

Both Duhm and Marti assign the oracle to the same date and author as the preceding section (verses 1–10). In both we have special mention of the watchman, and in both the spot from which the

[Ex.?] One calleth unto me out of Seir, Watchman,
12 what of the night? Watchman, what of the night? The watchman said, The morning cometh, and also the night: if ye will inquire, inquire ye: turn ye, come.

---

11. The name *Dûmah* is mysterious. There were several spots of this name, one of which lay in Haurân, and is therefore altogether improbable. On the other hand, we find a Dumat el Jandal (el Jofs) in a rocky valley on the frontiers of Syria and Arabia (cf. Gen. xxv. 14). Thus Gesenius and Hitzig have sought to identify the name here with this spot. But these local identifications would probably lead us far astray. We are on safer ground when we follow the hint of the LXX τῆς Ἰδουμαίας, and find here a reference to Edom (called in ancient Egyptian *Aduma*, in Assyrian *Udumu*). Dûmah in Hebrew means 'silence,' and we may have here either one of those punning references so frequent in the O. T. (cf. Gen. xxix. 31—xxx. 24 *passim*) or a corruption of the name *Edom*.

Seir (*lit.* 'hairy') is the name of a mountain region, often used interchangeably with Edom. Render: 'To me there calls one from Seir, Watchman, how far has the night gone?' The night was divided into three watches by the ancient Hebrews (the Greeks and Romans had four), viz. from sunset till 10 p.m. the first watch (Lam. ii. 19), a 'middle watch' from 10 p.m. to 2 a.m. (Judges vii. 19), and lastly, 'the morning watch' from 2 a.m. till sunrise (Exod. xiv. 24).

The **night** here is a vivid metaphor, conveying the conception of depression as well as anxiety and uncertainty as to the future. The time we may surmise to be the close of the middle watch, or the beginning of the third. The inhabitants of Edom may have been disturbed by news of the uprising of the Medes, and the growing weakness of the Babylonian empire.

12. What does **morning** here portend? Evidently the reverse of darkness, i.e. prosperity, hope, and a clear outlook. But prosperity for whom? For the Jews, or for the Edomites whose

---

oracle is uttered seems to be Palestinian. There is also a general resemblance in dramatic style and tone of thought. These grounds, however, are too slight a foundation for a definite theory. Unfortunately we possess no information as to the fortunes of Edom in the period 549-539 B.C. It is to be noted that the tone of bitterness which characterizes the Ezekiel passages (circ. 580 B.C.) and Isa. xxxiv, lxiii. 1-6 (post-exilian) is here subdued. This is not inconsistent with the date 549-539 B.C. as the probable period to which this brief oracle might be assigned.

[**R**] The burden upon Arabia. 13

[**I?**] In the forest in Arabia shall ye lodge, O ye travelling

---

respective interests might be regarded as antagonistic? The tantalizing brevity of the oracle leaves us in uncertainty. There is indeed a remaining possibility that the voice which cries to the watchman comes from one of the large body of Jewish refugees who fled into Edom when Jerusalem was destroyed by Nebuchadrezzar (Jer. xl. 11). The 'morning' would then mean the morning which would bring light and hope to the Jew. Yet the future is uncertain. The shadows of night follow.

Oracle 'in the steppe' (verses 13–17). Here again, as in the case of verses 1–10, the title is derived from one of the characteristic opening words of the oracle. The word *'Arāb*, rendered 'steppe,' is used as a collective term for the *people*, inhabitants of the Arabian steppes, in 2 Chron. ix. 14, and this corresponds with the present use of the same word in Arabia for 'people' (Doughty, *Arabia Deserta*, i. p. 224). That the word should be rendered here by 'steppe' seems fairly clear from the like use of the corresponding feminine word *'arābah* (Isa. xxxiii. 9, xxxvi; Jer. ii. 6, &c.). By assigning a different vowel-punctuation to the same characters the word is read *'ereb*, 'evening,' by LXX, Targ., Pesh., and Vulg., and the ancient versions have been followed by a whole array of modern expositors, including Hitzig, Cheyne, Kuenen, and Guthe (see R. V. marg.). The expression that follows, **shall ye lodge** (*lit.* 'pass the night'), gives an apparent plausibility to this reading. But apart from this it has no appropriateness.

We have no data for determining the time of the oracle. The 'drawn sword,' the 'bent bow,' and the 'grievous war' in verse 15 may refer to Tiglath-Pileser's or Sargon's military expeditions. The cuneiform inscriptions of Tiglath-Pileser III refer to the tribute paid by Zabibiye, queen of the Arabs in 738 B. C., and by Samsiye in 734. The latter also paid tribute to Sargon in 720 and 715 B. C., and a similar act of vassalage was performed by It'amar king of the Sabaeans (Schrader, *COT.*, i. pp. 245, 247 foll., ii. p. 88). But whether the 'drawn sword' and the 'stress of war' of which mention is made in verse 15 can be construed as a reference to the campaigns conducted by the Assyrians in the latter half of the eighth century is most uncertain. And our uncertainty is increased when we ask the question, who the 'thirsty' and the 'refugees' fleeing from the sword are. The obvious answer is that they are the caravans of the Dedanites, driven by the invader from the ordinary caravan routes, and the wells which mark their several stages, who are thus harassed with hunger and thirst. It is possible that among the Dedanites there were refugees from Judah, under the stress of Assyrian or perhaps

14 companies of Dedanites. Unto him that was thirsty
they brought water; the inhabitants of the land of Tema
15 did meet the fugitives with their bread. For they fled
away from the swords, from the drawn sword, and from
16 the bent bow, and from the grievousness of war. For
thus hath the Lord said unto me, Within a year,
according to the years of an hireling, and all the glory of
17 Kedar shall fail: and the residue of the number of the

(in the closing years of the seventh century) of Babylonian invasion. The Aramaic word for 'bring' (like the word for 'come' in verse 12) in the Hebrew original makes the Isaianic authorship somewhat doubtful, though more than this cannot be said. It might indeed be pre-Isaianic.

13-14. Translate in accordance with R. V. (marg.):—

> 'In the thickets, in the steppe shall ye pass the night,—ye caravans of Dedanites.
> To meet the thirsty one, bring water,—ye dwellers in the land of Temâ,
> With his bread [i. e. the bread he needs] greet the fugitive...'

'Thicket' or 'bush' seems to be the best translation of the Hebrew. It is possible, however, that we have here the Arabic word *wa'r,* meaning a stony rock-strewn waste. The *Dedanites* were a trading race of Arabs, occupied in conveying merchandise to Babylon. From Ezek. xxvii. 20 (cf. verse 15) we learn that their wares consisted of saddle-cloths, which found their way to the great mercantile emporium of Western Asian commerce, Tyre. It is evident that they occupied settlements near Edom (Jer. xlix. 8; Ezek. xxv. 13). *Temâ* was a region in the north of Arabia on the borders of the Syrian Desert, 'one of the most important stations on the ancient trade-route from Yemen to Syria' (Nöldeke in *Enc. Bibl.*, article 'Ishmael').

Verses 16 and 17 are a *prosaic addition by a later writer* denouncing a Divine judgment on the inhabitants of *Kedar.* It is difficult to see what connexion there can be between these two verses and what precedes. The latter is conceived in a sympathetic spirit. These verses reveal no sympathy at all. It is by no means so certain, as Dr. Francis Brown ('Kedar,' in *Enc. Bibl.*) appears to assume, what was the actual relation between Kedar and Dedan. This writer holds that the former included the latter. At the time when this fragment was written, Kedar was prosperous, and its archers were regarded as formidable. The 'flocks of Kedar' and the 'rams of Nebaioth' are placed in juxtaarchers, the mighty men of the children of Kedar, shall be few: for the LORD, the God of Israel, hath spoken it.

[**R**] The burden of the valley of vision. **22**

position in Isa. lx. 7, and we find Kedar and Nebaioth similarly combined in the Assyrian inscriptions. See especially Winckler in *KAT.*^{3}, i. p. 151[1], and also Margoliouth in Hastings' *DB.*, 'Kedar'; and S. A. Smith, *Keilsch. Assurbanipals*, col. vii. 124, viii. 15 (in which the king of Kedar is said to have fought with the kings of Palestine, the vassals of Ašurbanipal, and to have been crushed by the Assyrian power). Whether the overthrow recorded in Rassam's cylinder of Ašurbanipal (col. viii) is that to which this fragment refers is uncertain. This might be regarded as possible if the preceding verses be taken as Isaianic or pre-Isaianic in origin. Skinner calls attention to a similar threat against Dedan in Jeremiah's prophecy against Edom in the time of Nebuchadnezzar (Jer. xlix. 7 foll.).

The language of this addendum resembles that of xvi. 13 foll., and may, indeed, have been modelled upon it. If, as we assumed in the comment on the above passage, Isaiah wrote the latter as an addendum to the preceding oracle on Moab belonging to a previous generation, we might conclude that Isaiah was also the author of this brief prosaic appendix, and that the preceding oracle 13-15, and perhaps verses 11, 12 also, were, like chaps. xv, xvi, the utterances of an earlier period than that of Isaiah. This is indeed, as we have already stated on a preceding page, quite a possible view. On the other hand, it is at least equally probable that a later writer wrote these concluding verses with the literary model before him of chaps. xv and xvi, contained in some collection of Isaiah's oracles which he possessed. On the whole, this latter view appears to us the more probable, but the data upon which a sound opinion can be based are so few and slight that no confident assertion is possible.

17. The word **archers** is a correct interpretation of the original, which means properly 'bow.' The phrase **mighty men** represents the ordinary Hebrew word for 'warriors.' The practice of archery had prevailed among the Northern Arabs from time immemorial (Gen. xxi. 20).

CHAPTER XXII.

The frivolity and inexpiable sin of Jerusalem (verses 1-14). In respect of clearness this section furnishes a refreshing contrast to

---

[1] Winckler notes that the flourishing period of Kedar and Nebaioth *begins* about 640 B. C.

[1] What aileth thee now, that thou art wholly gone
2 up to the housetops? O thou that art full of shoutings, a

---

that which precedes: its authorship is evidently that of Isaiah, and its historic situation is without question that which was furnished by the invasion by Sennacherib in 701 B.C. We are reminded somewhat of the position of Amos at the autumnal festival at Bethel, when that prophet denounced doom against the festal throng ('howling' in place of song, viii. 3). As disaster then impended over the northern kingdom (circ. 739?), so now, at the close of the eighth century, the armies of Assyria threatened Judah. Isaiah is ill at ease while the city is merry-making. The roofs are crowded with sight-seers; the streets are full of exultation, noise, and movement. Did the people know that catastrophe was impending? If they had dim forebodings, they 'put aside the evil day,' like the nobles that sat at ease on their divans in Samaria in the days of Amos (vi. 3).

> 'Did ye not hear it? No; 'twas but the wind,
> Or the car rattling o'er the stony street;
> On with the dance! let joy be unconfined;
> No sleep till morn, when youth and pleasure meet
> To chase the glowing hours with flying feet.'

Amid the crowd the prophet passes solitary, dejected, with Yahweh's message of indignant warning in his heart.

The entire passage may be divided into three sections. Verses 1-5, in which the elegiac (or Ḳînah) measure can be distinctly traced, and lamentation is uttered over the festive city. Verses 6-10, descriptive of the siege of the city: the elegiac measure is still discernible, but the lines are mutilated, and from the latter part of verse 9 to the first part of verse 11 we have a prosaic interpolation introduced probably into a portion of the original document where the lines had become illegible. Lastly, verses 12-14 portray the doom that awaits the frivolous crowd.

1. The actual reading of the original title is very uncertain. Instead of the Hebrew word for 'vision' the LXX read in their text *Zion*. This may have been due to a mutilation of the first portion of the Hebrew word for 'vision.' Cheyne proposes to read Ḥinnom, which of course was the name of a well-known valley near Jerusalem. Marti is disposed to adopt this suggestion[1].

aileth thee is not the right expression. Render: 'What,

---

[1] On the other hand, the LXX reading, 'utterance of the valley of Zion,' receives strong support from the opening of verse 9, where the fissures of the city of David are referred to. It is quite possible that this was the title in the original small collection of Isaianic oracles.

tumultuous city, a joyous town; thy slain are not slain
with the sword, neither are they dead in battle. All thy 3
rulers fled away together, they were bound by the archers:
all that were found of thee were bound together, they fled
afar off. Therefore said I, Look away from me, I will 4

---

pray, hath come to thee, that thou hast gone up all of thee to the roofs?' The feminine form of the second person in the Hebrew refers to the personified totality of the inhabitants of the city. In verse 4 this personified totality is called 'daughter of my people.' It is impossible to fix on any definite occasion for the popular rejoicing. Duhm goes to the Assyrian documents to find one, and ingeniously suggests that it was the advent of king Padi, the puppet of Assyria and placed over the inhabitants of Ekron, whom the latter had imprisoned and handed over to Ḥezeḳiah (Sennacherib's Taylor cylinder, col. ii. 69-72). The arrival of this royal prisoner 'in iron fetters' would no doubt be an occasion for popular excitement and crowded sight-seers[1].

2. thy slain are not slain with the sword. The expression is somewhat obscure, i. e. the defenders of the capital are not honourably slain by the enemy (the Assyrians) on the field of battle, but they are subjected to some other calamity—perhaps pestilence (so Delitzsch and Dillmann).

3. The seer vividly describes the panic created by the enemy's approach. **they were bound by the archers** is hardly a possible rendering (though supported by Gesenius). Translate: 'Without bow they were bound prisoners' (so R. V. marg.). This negative use (= 'without') of the Hebrew preposition is not infrequent. It must be confessed, however, that the language seems artificial, and when we turn to the LXX our suspicion that the original text does not stand before us is strongly confirmed. No word for 'bow' stood in the Hebrew text of the Greek translators. Yet this text also may have suffered corruption, for the LXX rendering does not yield a very good sense. We have sound reason for regarding the word for 'bow' as part of the original text, since the word in the original which the LXX read in its place closely resembles it. Marti follows Duhm's reconstruction of the text based on the LXX, which yields a very probable emendation, viz. 'Holding the bow, they were taken captive.' This assumes the omission of the word 'together' in he preceding clause.

4. The prophet refuses to be comforted in the presence of these

---

[1] Schrader, *COT.*, i. pp. 282, 285; *KIB.*, ii. pp. 92 foll.

weep bitterly; labour not to comfort me, for the spoiling
5 of the daughter of my people. For it is a day of
discomfiture, and of treading down, and of perplexity,
from the Lord, the LORD of hosts, in the valley of
vision; a breaking down of the walls, and a crying to the
6 mountains. And Elam bare the quiver, with chariots of
men *and* horsemen; and Kir uncovered the shield.

---

impending calamities. Render: 'I will break forth in bitter lamentation; be not urgent to console me for the destruction of the daughter of my people.' Cf. note on i. 8.

5. In place of **For it is a day . . . from the LORD** read 'For the Lord . . . hath a day of,' &c. The expression 'day of the Lord' often recurs in Isaiah's oracles; see note on ii. 12. Render: 'The day of uproar, treading down, and confusion'; evidently the day when Jerusalem is to be besieged. We hear the crash of the battering-ram and of the stones hurled from catapults, the shouts of besiegers and besieged, and the groans of the wounded. The reliefs on the monuments of Tiglath-Pileser III in the Nimrûd gallery of the British Museum (reproduced in article 'Siege' in *Enc. Bibl.*) will serve as a good pictorial commentary; cf. Nah. ii. 2, 4-10, iii. 2, 3. On the facts of the siege of Jerusalem see the above-quoted Taylor cylinder (prism) of Sennacherib, col. iii. ll. 11-34 in Schrader's *KIB.*, ii. pp. 94 foll.; *COT.*, i. pp. 283 foll.

6. The mention of Elamite bowmen has occasioned difficulties, since Elam as a whole had not yet been subjugated by Assyria. This, however, does not stand in the way of Elamite mercenaries being employed by the Assyrians. Duhm compares the Philistines in the army of David, or Germans in the Roman armies, or, we might add, the Greeks in the army of Cyrus. Elam, we know, was celebrated for its bowmen in the days of Jeremiah (xlix. 35). 'The chariots of men and horsemen' is an impossible combination in the original. Duhm would omit the word for 'men' as a gloss. This would enable us to restore the elegiac metre of the line:—

'And Elam bears the quiver—in chariot-cavalcade,'

i. e. in the chariots harnessed to horses. The language seems to imply that the Elamite bowmen took their place in the chariots. This we know is what actually occurred. In *Assyrian* chariots there were as a rule *two* occupants, the driver, and, on his right, the bowman. We find, however, in nearly every instance that the quiver was not carried on the back of the archer, but the arrows (accompanied often by a battle-axe) were conveyed in a receptacle on the outer edge of the chariot, which stood con-

And it came to pass, that thy choicest valleys were full 7
of chariots, and the horsemen set themselves in array at
the gate. And he took away the covering of Judah; and 8
thou didst look in that day to the armour in the house of

---

veniently on the right of the archer (see article 'Chariot' in *Enc. Bibl.*). Occasionally, however, we have a single-horse chariot carrying two archers with quiver *on the back* (British Museum, Nimrûd gallery, No. 45). It is possible that we ought to render '*among* the chariot-cavalcade,' for the testimony of the monuments shows that 'from the close of the eighth century onwards the archers became dissociated from the chariots' (*Enc. Bibl.*, ibid., col. 729).

The omission of the word *ādām*, meaning 'men,' from the text may appear to some too drastic a remedy. This word has often been confused with Edom and with Aram (since the characters *d* and *r* in early and late Hebrew were closely similar). We might therefore with a very slight emendation render: 'amid the chariots of Aram (= Syria) (are) horsemen.' The word for 'horse' here in Hebrew (*pārāsh*) has also the signification 'horseman.' We have in the clause merely an added picturesque detail.

The shield was taken out of the cover which wrapped it as a protection preparatory to use in active warfare. The geographical position of *Ḳir* cannot be determined. According to Amos i. 5 and ix. 7 it was the original home of the Aramaean race, while from 2 Kings xvi. 9 we learn that it formed part of the Assyrian dominions, and that the inhabitants of Damascus were deported thither[1]. In verse 7 read: 'were full of chariots and horsemen.'

7. Render: 'they have taken up their position at the city gate.' Apparently all is ready for the final onset against the serried masses of the besieged, or, it may be, to resist a sally which the enemy are preparing. This would probably have been made clear if we had the text of the original before us complete. But this is evidently not the case. The shorter line of the elegiac (Ḳinah) measure, which immediately follows this, has been lost. Apparently the elegiac metre ceases here.

8. Translate: 'Then did he withdraw the covering of Judah,' i.e. withdrew the protection of Judah, and showed the utter weakness and forlorn condition of the state. It is uncertain what is the subject of the sentence: Yahweh (as Cheyne once supposed), or the enemy (so Cheyne in *SBOT.*). This leads the

---

[1] In 2 Kings xvi. 9 LXX omit Ḳîr from their text. But Luc. evidently sustains it, though it is misinterpreted.

9 the forest. [I?] And ye saw the breaches of the city of
David, that they were many: and ye gathered together the
10 waters of the lower pool. And ye numbered the houses
of Jerusalem, and ye brake down the houses to fortify the
11 wall. Ye made also a reservoir between the two walls
for the water of the old pool: but ye looked not unto
him that had done this, neither had ye respect unto him
12 that fashioned it long ago. [I] And in that day did the
Lord, the LORD of hosts, call to weeping, and to
mourning, and to baldness, and to girding with sack-
13 cloth: and behold, joy and gladness, slaying oxen and

---

writer to describe the means employed to place the city in a state of preparedness to resist a siege. **the house of the forest,** in which the armour and other implements of war were stored, is a reference to the house erected by Solomon, called the 'house of the forest of Lebanon,' of which we have a detailed description in 1 Kings vii. 2 foll., cf. x. 17.

9 foll. The survey is continued. The fortress-mount of David's city Zion reveals serious gaping fissures, through which an enemy might enter. We are passing from poetry to prose. The following lines up to the beginning of verse 11 seem to be what Duhm regards it, an interpolation, taken perhaps from a contemporary record of Ḥezeḳiah's reign, describing the events of the siege of Jerusalem. The editor has evidently been working over the original text of Isaiah's oracles, which had probably suffered serious mutilation at this place. It is fairly obvious that the prophet intended to refer to the 'house of the forest' as rifled of its store of arms, and to the gaping fissures of the Zion fortress as wrought by the military engines of the enemy. Verse 12 clearly shows that the prophet is thinking of the city as already stormed and captured.

The locality of the **old pool** (regarded by most writers as another name for the 'upper pool' of vii. 3) and of the **lower pool** has been a subject of considerable controversy; see note on vii. 3.

11. 'Yet ye looked not unto Him that does it.' Here the original words of Isaiah are resumed. The 'it' evidently refers to the destruction wrought by the enemy.

12. We are strongly reminded by the tone of this verse and its language ('baldness,' 'girding of sackcloth') of another Isaianic passage, iii. 24.

13. The prophet turns bitterly to the scenes of frivolous

killing sheep, eating flesh and drinking wine: let us eat
and drink, for to-morrow we shall die. And the LORD 14
of hosts revealed himself in mine ears, Surely this iniquity
shall not be purged from you till ye die, saith the Lord,
the LORD of hosts.

[I] Thus saith the Lord, the LORD of hosts, Go, get thee 15

---

pleasure enacting around him: 'yet see! joy and gladness . . .' It is by no means certain who utters the phrase 'eat and drink, for on the morrow we shall die.' Is it said by the prophet to the giddy thoughtless crowd in scornful irony? or does it come from the crowd that mocks the warnings of the prophet, and flings back his warning 'to-morrow we shall die' in his face? or does the prophet soliloquize and quote a current proverb, and place it on the lips of the revellers? This last seems most probable. Ancient Egyptian literature, as Erman has shown us (*Life in Ancient Egypt*, p. 386 foll.), is replete with echoes of the same idea.

'Let there be music and singing before thee,
Cast behind thee all cares, and mind thee of joy,
Till there cometh that day when we journey to the land that loveth silence,'

sings the harper at the funerary feast of the priest Neferḥotep. Parallels from Horace might be cited. We are reminded of the line in the German *Lied*: 'Pluck the rose ere it fades' (*Pflücket die Rose eh' sie verblüht*).

14. Read with the margin R. V. 'expiated by you' instead of **purged from you.** The concluding formula, **saith the Lord, the LORD of hosts,** is omitted in LXX, and is evidently an unnecessary addition of some scribe. Such persistent frivolity and indifference can have no other retribution than death.

Denunciation of Shebna the vezier (verses 15-25). The prophet is commanded by God to betake himself to the steward (or vezier) of the royal household, Shebna. He finds him at the rock-hewn sepulchre which the vezier had just been preparing for himself, and announces to him that he is deposed from his office and is to be expelled from the country (verses 15-18). The prophet then goes on to declare that Eliakim son of Hilkiah is to be his worthy successor, and expresses the utmost confidence in his steadfastness, comparing him to 'a nail in a sure place' (verse 23).

The Isaianic authorship of verses 15-18 seems to be well assured. But it is otherwise with verses 19-25. Cheyne in his *Introduction* points out several expressions which are strange to the actual vocabulary used by the prophet, and suggest lateness.

unto this treasurer, even unto Shebna, which is over the
16 house, *and say*, What doest thou here? and whom hast

Hitzig was the first to separate verses 24, 25 as a later prosaic addition. The verses that precede (19–23) Duhm holds to have been subsequently added as a supplement by some one who was interested in the fortunes of the family of Eliakim and kept in view xxxvi. 3[1], while the concluding verses (24, 25) are a still later addition by one who was hostile to that family and cannot have lived earlier than the Exile.

We agree with those critics from Hitzig downwards who would separate verses 24, 25 as a later gloss. Style and contents point to this conclusion, but the arguments against the Isaianic authorship of verses 19–23 are by no means decisive. They follow in natural sequence to the preceding verses, and, though style and rhythm are not by any means at the level of Isaiah's best, they contain little that militates against the theory of his authorship.

The composition of this section (verses 15–23) must be placed at nearly the same time as the earlier passage in this chapter (verses 1–14). This is clearly shown by a comparison of Isaiah's denunciation with the history recorded in Isa. xxxvi. 3, 22, xxxvii. 2 (corresponding to the parallels in 2 Kings xviii. 18, 37, xix. 2), a compilation that cannot have been made earlier than the close of the Exile period; see Skinner's 1 *and* 2 *Kings* in this series, Introduction, p. 18 foll. Now, when we turn to this later record we find Eliakim in the high position to which Isaiah in this prophecy elevates him: but the denunciation is not fulfilled, in its entirety at all events, with respect to Shebna. If he suffered immediate expulsion from Judah, he must have been shortly after taken back into favour and placed in the lower yet very important and responsible position of royal secretary. The supposition of Kuenen (*Histor. Kritische Einleitung*, p. 94) that the writer of 2 Kings xviii was imperfectly informed, which commends itself to Kittel[2], appears to us a questionable solution. Dillmann (in the fifth edition of the *Commentary on Isaiah*) made the more plausible suggestion that his downfall followed later than the event recorded in 2 Kings xviii. What the actual facts were it is difficult even to surmise. It is probable that Shebna represented the anti-Assyrian or Egyptian party (so Cheyne), and had made himself personally hostile to Isaiah who, like Hosea before him in the northern

---

[1] It is difficult to understand how Duhm can reconcile verse 19 with 2 Kings xviii. 18 (Isa. xxxvi. 3), where Shebna occupies the high position of royal secretary.

[2] In his sixth edition of the *Commentary on Isaiah* previously edited by Dillmann.

thou here, that thou hast hewed thee out here a sepul-
chre? hewing him out a sepulchre on high, graving an
habitation for himself in the rock! Behold, the LORD 17
will hurl thee away violently as a *strong* man; yea, he
will wrap thee up closely. He will surely turn and toss 18
thee like a ball into a large country; there shalt thou die,
and there shall be the chariots of thy glory, thou shame

kingdom, steadfastly ridiculed this policy of leaning upon Egypt. It is also not impossible that the fiery denunciation of the prophet had only a moderate effect on the mind of Ḥezeḳiah. Shebna's humiliation was only partial.

15. For treasurer read with R.V. (marg.) 'steward' or minister. The Hebrew word for it, *sōkēn*, appears to be the same in meaning as *sagan* in Isa. xli. 25, and also occurs in Jeremiah and Ezekiel and frequently in Nehemiah. The form *sōkēn*, however, has probably quite as good a title to be the original one, since we find it in Phoenician inscriptions. Not improbably in either form it was a loan-word borrowed from the Assyrian *šaknu*[1].

16. The name Shebna seems (as Ewald and Hitzig pointed out) to be Aramaean. Perhaps the fact of his being a foreigner awakened the prophet's anger, especially when he finds him hewing out a magnificent sepulchre for his family, probably in close neighbourhood to those belonging to the Jewish aristocracy. The prophet asks with indignation, **whom hast thou here . . .?** i. e. what noble relative or other personal claim to bury your dead in such a place and in such a stately tomb.

17. hurl thee: i. e. from place and power. The rendering **as a** strong **man** is doubtful, though the conception of Yahweh as a strong man or warrior is by no means unfamiliar (Exod. xv. 3; Ps. xxiv. 8, &c.). It is more probable that we should render 'O mighty one' (with a slightly different punctuation and definite article prefixed), an expression of sarcastic scorn flung at Shebna, parallel to that which meets us at the close of verse 18.

18. R.V. marg. is on the whole more accurate: 'wind thee round,' &c., but it would be more correct to render 'roll thee up in a roll like a ball.' The word **roll** here in the original has the

---

[1] It is interesting to note that in the form *sōkēn* it appears to have existed in the Canaanite language in 1400 B. C., and is transcribed in the form *zu-ki-ni* in the Tell el Amarna tablets (Bezold's *Oriental Diplomacy*, Letter 64. 9, p. 54; cf. p. 119), and is translated by the Babylonian word *râbiṣi*, 'officer.' See Zimmern's list, *KAT.*^{3}, iii. p. 652; cf. p. 649 (*sāgān*).

19 of thy lord's house. And I will thrust thee from thine
office, and from thy station shall he pull thee down.
20 And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will call my
21 servant Eliakim the son of Hilkiah: and I will clothe
him with thy robe, and strengthen him with thy girdle,
and I will commit thy government into his hand: and
he shall be a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and
22 to the house of Judah. And the key of the house of
David will I lay upon his shoulder; and he shall open, and
none shall shut; and he shall shut, and none shall open.
23 And I will fasten him as a nail in a sure place; and he
shall be for a throne of glory to his father's house. [PE]
24 And they shall hang upon him all the glory of his father's

---

same root as the Hebrew word for 'turban,' which is a rolled-up piece of linen cloth. In the **large country** outside Judah there will be room for his ambition and megalomania to expand—'thy chariots of state, thou disgrace of thy master's house.'

21. The **robe** of Shebna with which Eliakim is to be clothed was a long state-robe of linen cloth, see article 'Tunic' in *Enc. Bibl.* The word in Hebrew is properly used of a linen under-garment, but is here employed (like girdle) of the *civic* official costume. In the later language of Exod. xxviii, xxix, and Leviticus these terms are used of *priestly* attire. In post-exilian times the civic was absorbed into the ecclesiastical.

The term **father** here means rather more than merely 'benefactor' (cf. ix. 5; Job xxix. 16). It signifies also 'counsellor' or *wezîr*. Thus Joseph exclaims that he has been made 'father' or *wezîr* to Pharaoh, Gen. xlv. 8, while Haman is called 'second father' of Artaxerxes in the LXX addition to Esther iii. 13.

22. The key was laid upon the shoulder because it was long and heavy. Its form was entirely different from anything modern and European. See Cheyne's commentary in *SBOT.* (Isaiah), p. 160, with the figure of a merchant carrying keys on his shoulder. But it is extremely doubtful whether the modern Oriental representations are safe guides: see *Hebrew Antiquities* (R.T.S.), p. 68, and also Warre Cornish's *Concise Dictionary of Greek and Roman Antiquities* under 'Janua,' p. 357 (right-hand col.), with its representation of an iron Egyptian key.

23. fasten: properly 'fix by *striking in.*'

24. Instead of **cups** we ought probably to render *wash-basins.*

house, the offspring and the issue, every small vessel, from the vessels of cups even to all the vessels of flagons. In that day, saith the LORD of hosts, shall the nail that 25 was fastened in a sure place give way; and it shall be hewn down, and fall, and the burden that was upon it shall be cut off; for the LORD hath spoken it.

[R] The burden of Tyre. 23

Here again we have a word borrowed from the Assyrian. These special words, as 'nail,' 'wash-basin,' 'flagon' (or pitcher), are omitted in the LXX, perhaps because not understood or regarded as metaphorical. Thus 'nail' (or 'peg') is rendered by 'ruler' in verse 23. Yet it is almost certain that the LXX (as represented by the Alex. and Vatic. MSS.) had another text before them. It is to be noticed, however, that Codex Marchalianus (Q in Swete's edition) reproduces in the margin one of the missing words of our Hebrew text (viz. that for wash-basins).

CHAPTER XXIII.

Oracle concerning Tyre (verses 1-18). A prophetic message of doom against Phoenicia, and more particularly Tyre and Sidon, its two famed mercantile ports. Its great merchant-vessels and its inhabitants are filled with anguish and consternation at the destruction of her commerce and prosperity. Egypt, from which came the 'harvest of the Nile,' is deeply stirred at the news of Tyre's calamity (1-5); the inhabitants of Tyre and the coastland are to migrate from their desolated country to Tarshish, since the Lord of Hosts has purposed to humiliate Tyre, and not Tyre only, since 'He has stretched out his hand over the sea and shaken the kingdoms' (6-14). In the concluding verses of this chapter (15-18) we have an addendum in which it is announced that after seventy years Tyre shall revive and her merchandise and her hire shall be dedicated as holy to Yahweh.

The problems respecting this chapter are complex, and the best statement of them will be found in the luminous pages of Cheyne's *Introduction*. We must obviously begin with a consideration of the first fourteen verses. These refer to a humiliation of Tyre. When did this take place? Various historic occasions present themselves: (1) In the reign of Shalmaneser IV (727-722), of which Menander gives an account preserved in Josephus, *Antiquities*, ix. 14. 2. Shalmaneser conquered Phoenicia, but the Tyrian island-stronghold maintained a stout resistance for five years, and this must have been prolonged into the reign of

[**Pre-Ex.**] Howl, ye ships of Tarshish; for it is laid waste, so that there is no house, no entering in: from the land of

---

Shalmaneser's successor, Sargon. We know that Tyre was subject to Sargon and paid tribute, Schrader, *COT.*, i. p. 158. (2) In the reign of Sennacherib that monarch came into collision with Luli king of Sidon [1] and drove him from his throne (Taylor cylinder, col. 11, 35 foll.; Kujundshik Bull inscription, iii Rawl. 12. 18 foll.; Schrader, *COT.*, i. pp. 280 foll., 294 foll.), but we have no indication that he attacked Tyre. (3) Far more serious was the overthrow which Phoenicia suffered in the reigns of Esarhaddon and Ašurbanipal. Under the influence of Tirhakah, Ethbaal king of Tyre revolted between 672 and 668, was besieged by Assyrian land-troops, and was finally reduced by Ašurbanipal in 668 B. C. (4) Lastly, after the fall of Jerusalem, Nebuchadnezzar attacked the Phoenicians who formed the northern link in the coalition (which included Judaea and Egypt) against Babylonia. Tyre suffered a thirteen years' siege by Nebuchadnezzar's armies. To this revolt against Babylonia by Ethbaal II of Tyre, and the subsequent siege, we have special and detailed reference in Ezek. xxvi–xxviii and Jer. xxvii. 3; cf. Josephus, *Antiquities*, x. ii. 1, and *Cont. Ap.* i. 21. Whether Tyre was finally captured as Ezekiel prophesied in 586-5 B. C. (Ezek. xxvi. 4, 7-14) is far from certain. No ancient authority states that Nebuchadnezzar actually succeeded in his final object of taking the stronghold. There is no definite assertion of the fact in the oracle delivered by Ezekiel sixteen years after his prophecy (chap. xxvi). In his last prophetic utterance (xxix. 17 foll.) he only speaks of 'the service which Nebuchadnezzar had rendered' against Tyre, for which recompense is to be given him by the conquest of Egypt.

The conclusion to which this historic survey brings us is that it is only the events of the seventh century that give an adequate basis for the oracle (verses 1-14), viz. those recorded in (3) and (4). The attack upon Phoenicia in the time of Shalmaneser, described in Menander's narrative, has been questioned by recent investigators, viz. Meyer, Stade, and Winckler, who agree with Geo. Smith in his surmise (*History of Sennacherib*, p. 69) that there is a confusion in Menander's account (as cited by Josephus) between the reign of Shalmaneser IV and the events of the reign of Sennacherib (viz. those mentioned under (2)) [2]. If we ac-

---

[1] By some identified with the Elulaeus whom Menander calls king of Tyre.

[2] See Stade, *Gesch. Israels,* p. 599 footnote; Winckler, *Gesch. Babyloniens u. Assyriens,* p. 234 and note, pp. 333 foll. Winckler is, however, now disposed to believe that the confusion in the pages of

Kittim it is revealed to them. Be still, ye inhabitants of 2
the isle; thou whom the merchants of Zidon, that pass

---

cept the view that the reference of the oracle is to the attack of Sennacherib on Luli and to the destruction which that expedition was considered to harbinger, we might follow Cheyne's earlier opinion, adopted in his *Commentary* twenty years ago, that the problematic verse 13, in which reference is made to the overthrow of the land of the Chaldeans, is based upon Sennacherib's victorious campaign against Babylonia and the expulsion of its king Merodach-Baladan in 703-2. Isaiah might well have 'regarded this as foreshadowing the fate of Phoenicia.' At first sight this seems an attractive hypothesis, especially as it appears to furnish a natural solution of the difficulties which belong to verse 13. But there are two considerations which weigh heavily against it. (*a*) Sennacherib's enterprise against Sidon does not possess the importance which this oracle assigns to the overthrow of Phoenicia, and it is by no means clear that Tyre was in any serious degree affected. (*b*) The language of verses 1-4, while it contains many Isaianic expressions, also includes others which are foreign to the prophet. These are set forth in Cheyne's *Introduction* and in Dillmann-Kittel's *Commentary*.

Accordingly we are led to the *third* event enumerated above, the overthrow of Tyre after a five years' siege by Esarhaddon and consummated by Ašurbanipal in the year 668 B.C. The first twelve verses allude to this event, and the phraseology of the oracle is best explained by the assumption that it was written by a disciple of the prophet Isaiah and incorporated in his master's oracles. Twenty years later Ašurbanipal crushed a formidable conspiracy in Babylonia: 'Sippar, Babylon, and Kutha, the three most important seats of culture in Northern Babylonia, were subdued and their inhabitants reduced to subjection who had not died already of hunger or disease. . . . Babylonia was therefore once again conquered, and so completely ruined by devastation that for a long time it had no further craving for independence' (Winckler). We find here the historic background to verses 13, 14 which were subsequently added by the prophet or some other writer as a warning to Tyre.

Verses 15-18 were added after the reign of Nebuchadnezzar and during the days of the Exile, when the advent of a new power which was to destroy Babylonia was eagerly anticipated. The 'seventy years' is an obvious reminiscence, like Zech. i. 12, of

---

Josephus is with the events in the reign of Ašurbanipal (3), with which some of the details in the narrative agree (*KAT.*^{3}, p. 94).

3 over the sea, have replenished. And on great waters the
seed of Shihor, the harvest of the Nile, was her revenue;
4 and she was the mart of nations. Be thou ashamed, O
Zidon: for the sea hath spoken, the strong hold of the
sea, saying, I have not travailed, nor brought forth,
neither have I nourished young men, nor brought up

Jer. xxv. 11, xxix. 10. In Jer. xxv. 12-14 chastisement is foretold against the king of Babylon after that period (see below, note on verse 15). Then would come the time for Tyre's revival.

The first twelve verses are composed in the elegiac measure, but the text in many places is uncertain. The original poem seems to have consisted of strophes of seven or eight lines each.

1. Respecting the **ships of Tarshish** and the position of Tarshish see comment on ii. 16 and footnote. These merchant-vessels on their return to the Phoenician coast discover to their consternation that Tyre and Sidon, the great emporia of commerce, have been destroyed. Render with Duhm the first lines:—

> 'Howl, ships of Tarshish—for home is no more (*lit.* 'is destroyed'):
> At the entering in from the land of Kittim—'twas revealed unto them.'

Kittim was the modern Cyprus, mainly peopled by Phoenician colonists, the town Kitium being their chief settlement (see *KAT.*^{3}, i. p. 128). The Phoenician merchantmen would naturally call at Cyprus on their way to Tyre, and as they sailed away from Cyprus to the Phoenician coast they would first become aware of the destruction of the far-famed ports of Tyre and Sidon.

2. For **isle** read with R.V. marg. 'coastland,' i. e. of Phoenicia. It is very difficult here to follow any elegiac (*Kinah*) rhythm.

3. **Shihor** here and in Jer. ii. 18 obviously means the Nile or, as Fried. Delitzsch suggests, the Pelusiac branch of the Nile (*Wo lag das Paradies?* p. 311). Egypt from the earliest times (Gen. xii. 10, xli. 1 foll., 57) to those of the Roman Republic and Empire has been one of the most important granaries of the lands surrounding the Mediterranean. The grain and other products were conveyed in Phoenician vessels, since the Phoenicians, like the English of the present day, to whom the German philologist Böttcher fittingly compared them[1], did nearly all the

---

[1] *Ausführliches Lehrbuch der Hebräischen Sprache*, § 282.

virgins. When the report cometh to Egypt, they shall 5
be sorely pained at the report of Tyre. Pass ye over to 6
Tarshish; howl, ye inhabitants of the isle. Is this your 7
joyous *city*, whose antiquity is of ancient days, whose feet
carried her afar off to sojourn? Who hath purposed this 8
against Tyre, the crowning *city*, whose merchants are
princes, whose traffickers are the honourable of the earth?
The Lord of hosts hath purposed it, to stain the pride 9
of all glory, to bring into contempt all the honourable
of the earth. Pass through thy land as the Nile, O 10
daughter of Tarshish; there is no girdle *about thee* any

---

carrying trade of the Mediterranean Sea from the eighth century till the days of Alexander.

5. Egypt trembles at the news. With good reason, for about this time (670 B.C.) Egypt felt the strong hand of Esarhaddon.

7. For **antiquity** read 'origin.' The great antiquity of Tyre was asserted by classical writers, Herodotus and Strabo. Josephus, *Antiq.* viii. 3. 1, places the founding of Tyre 240 years before the building of Solomon's temple; probably basing this estimate on the accounts of Menander, to which he had access.

8. The elegiac measure is here more clearly marked. The poet-seer asks:—

'Who hath counselled this against Tyre—bestower of crowns;
Whose merchants are princes—traders honoured of earth?'

9. And the answer comes:—

'Yahweh of Hosts hath counselled it—[her] pride to disgrace,
All splendour to bring low;—all the honoured of earth.'

10. The LXX in their rendering show that the text is corrupt. The word for **Nile** is absent from their text, and is evidently due to dittography of the original Hebrew ending of the word for **pass** and the first two characters of the word for **land.** We are thus able to restore the elegiac metre. Moreover, the word for **girdle** in Hebrew is evidently due to corruption. It would be safer here to follow Duhm's suggestion and read 'harbour.' Accordingly we should translate:—

'Cultivate[1] thy land, daughter of Tarshish,—the harbour is no more!'

---

[1] Reading in Hebrew *'ibdî* for *'ibrî* ('pass'). Ezek. xxvii. 12 gives us valuable information as to the actual commerce of Tarshîsh

11 more. He hath stretched out his hand over the sea, he hath shaken the kingdoms: the LORD hath given commandment concerning Canaan, to destroy the strong
12 holds thereof. And he said, Thou shalt no more rejoice, O thou oppressed virgin daughter of Zidon: arise, pass over to Kittim; even there shalt thou have
13 no rest. Behold, the land of the Chaldeans; this people is no more; the Assyrian hath appointed it for the beasts of the wilderness: they set up their towers, they over-

Mercantile enterprise is destroyed, and the only resource for the inhabitants of Tarshish is to abandon trade for agriculture. This use of the word **daughter** as a personification for inhabitants is a commonplace of Hebrew poetry (i. 8, x. 32, xxii. 4; Jer. xlvi. 11, 19, 24; Zech. ii. 11; Ps. xlv. 13, cxxxvii. 8, &c.).

11. The **kingdoms** which God has caused to tremble probably refer to Phoenician colonies in Cyprus and elsewhere. But Egypt was no doubt in the thoughts of the prophet, which was just then (670 B. C.) feeling the heavy hand of Esarhaddon (cf. above, verse 5).

12. For **oppressed** substitute 'outraged.' The word for **virgin** in the Hebrew text (omitted by LXX) is evidently an addition, and should be left out. The inhabitants of the destroyed city Sidon naturally seek refuge in the Phoenician settlements of the neighbouring island Cyprus; but, as we learn from the previous verse, the judgment of God's outstretched hand had passed over the sea, and there was no security in Cyprus.

13 has been added either by the author of this prophecy in later years, or by some subsequent writer. The latter seems on the whole more probable, for we have here an inferior style and no rhythm. The historic reference has been already explained in the introductory remarks to this chapter, and we thus obtain on the whole the most satisfactory solution of the problems of this difficult verse. Formerly, when it was customary to regard this section as wholly Isaianic, and to refer it to the supposed conquest of Phoenicia in the years 726-721 (circ.) B. C., the reference to the

---

(*'Tartessus' in Hispania Baetica*). The products which it brought into the markets of Tyre were of great variety, but appear to have mainly consisted of silver, iron, tin, and lead from the Spanish mines. This fact gives peculiar significance to the reading of the LXX Hebrew text. On the constant confusion between the Hebrew characters for *r* and *d* cf. above, note on xxii. 6.

threew the palaces thereof; he made it a ruin. Howl, ye 14
ships of Tarshish: for your strong hold is laid waste.
[**Ex.**] And it shall come to pass in that day, that Tyre shall 15
be forgotten seventy years, according to the days of one
king: after the end of seventy years it shall be unto Tyre

Chaldeans was felt to be a serious stumbling-block, and Ewald actually proposed the drastic remedy of reading 'Canaanites' in place of **Chaldeans**, which is even adopted by so careful a scholar as Schrader (*COT.*, ii. pp. 102 foll.). Equally violent and arbitrary is Duhm's alteration of the word Chaldeans into Kitteans in order to establish a sequence with the preceding verse. We have no warrant for either procedure.

The style of the verse is very difficult, and there are several obscure words. The rendering of the R. V. may stand as a fair provisional translation. The LXX evidently had a shorter Hebrew text before them. The general sense is, however, fairly clear—the destruction of the land of the Chaldeans by Assyria.

Verses 15–18. The events of the preceding verses have long passed by. We are no longer in the seventh century, but in the sixth. Even the prolonged siege of Tyre by the armies of Nebuchadnezzar, watched by the prophet Ezekiel (xxvi. foll.) with such intense interest, has become a thing of the past. Phoenicia and its great seaports have declined. The parallel between this section and Jer. xxv. 12–14, which bears the clear impress of a later addition, and the mention of seventy years in both, strongly support the conclusion that both additions may have come from the same hand—a sixth-century writer, who prophesies a period of seventy years' oblivion. The lilt of an old Phoenician song, sung, it may well be, at the annual festivals of Baal or Ashtoreth, or in the drinking-bouts of the revellers (Isa. v. 11, 12), comes to the writer's memory:—

'Take up the harp,
Pass round the city,
Forgotten coquette.
Touch the strings deftly,
Sing many a song,
That thou be remembered.'

For Tyre shall be remembered in the years to come when the seventy years of oblivion are ended.

15. Translate: 'like the days of one king,' i. e. as it were during the years of the reigning king or of his dynasty. When that passes away a change for the better will come (cf. Exod. i. 8; Dan. vii. 17).

16 as in the song of the harlot. Take an harp, go about the
city, thou harlot that hast been forgotten; make sweet
melody, sing many songs, that thou mayest be remem-
17 bered. And it shall come to pass after the end of seventy
years, that the Lord will visit Tyre, and she shall return
to her hire, and shall play the harlot with all the kingdoms
18 of the world upon the face of the earth. And her mer-
chandise and her hire shall be holiness to the Lord: it
shall not be treasured nor laid up; for her merchandise
shall be for them that dwell before the Lord, to eat
sufficiently, and for durable clothing.

---

16. The song has the unmistakable dance-rhythm. Cf. Song of Songs iii. 3.

Intercourse with foreign nations was designated 'harlotry' by the prophet Hosea and those who followed him (especially Nahum and Ezekiel).

17. The visitation of Tyre here is to be a friendly one, and not by way of chastisement; like God's kindly visitation of Judah after seventy years in Jer. xxix. 10. In this and the following verse it is possible to discern the broadening influence of exile on the Jewish mind reflected in such noble passages of the Deutero-Isaiah as xlix. 6.

18. The hire of such commerce with foreign peoples, to which an evil name is given, is no longer to be the mere enrichment of Tyre. We move in the region of subtle metaphor, and have here an allusion to ancient custom. The temples of Baal and Ashtoreth (like those of Ishtar in Babylonia) had their licentious accompaniments (cf. Amos ii. 7). Female attendants, the ministrants of temple prostitution, brought their hire to the sanctuary. It was sacred to the deity. But these gains of Tyre's revived commercial prosperity are now to become sacred to Yahweh. Duhm holds that we ought not to import any ethical conceptions here. Just as the priests consumed the larger portion of the offerings, so with Tyre's revived commercial prosperity. It will pass into the hands of the priest-nation of Yahweh, and so become sacred. It will be for those 'who dwell before Yahweh,' viz. the Jews. Compare the language of the Trito-Isaiah respecting Jerusalem: 'Thy gateways shall be open continually.' We read in lx. 11, 'day and night they shall not be shut, to bring in unto thee the wealth of foreign nations'; cf. xli. 6. Yet it is conceivable that such an interpretation unduly narrows the significance of the

[PE] Behold, the Lord maketh the earth empty, and 24
maketh it waste, and turneth it upside down, and scattereth

---

present passage. Possibly also there underlies these verses a reminiscence of the days of Solomon, when the artistic resources of Tyre adorned the first temple.

Chapters XXIV–XXVII.

Yahweh's World-Judgment. We now come to a group of oracles which stand altogether separate from those we have yet considered, both in style and contents, though even here it is possible that Isaianic elements may have been incorporated. Their general character is concisely expressed by the comprehensive terms *eschatological* and *apocalyptic.* The term 'apocalyptic' is best explained in the language employed by Bousset in his article on 'Jewish Apocalyptic' in the third edition of Herzog's *Realencyclopädie* : 'The transition of prophetic literature to apocalyptic is really scarcely traceable. But it may be asserted in general terms that whereas prophecy foretells a definite future which has its foundation in the present, apocalyptic directs its anticipations solely and simply to the future—to a new world-period which stands sharply contrasted with the present. The classical model of all apocalyptic may be found in Dan. vii. . . . Powers that are rebellious and hostile to Yahweh bear rule. . . . It is only after a great war of destruction, a "Day of Yahweh," or day of the Great Judgment, that the dominion of God will begin.' Probably it was Ezekiel (chaps. xxxviii, xxxix) to whom the origin of this new conception was due. We refer to his portrayal of a great world-crisis in which the power of the heathen world arrayed under Gog was to confront Israel and be utterly vanquished by the might of Yahweh (see Introduction to Ezekiel in the *Temple Bible*, pp. xxii foll.). In later Jewish literature the personal head of the hostile world-power is Satan or the Devil.

From what has been said it will be readily inferred that we are now dealing with a later phase of Hebrew thought than that which prevailed in the days of Isaiah. Isaiah's oracles were deeply and closely concerned with the historic realities of the present. His mental horizon was on the whole severely limited, and though ideal conceptions like those set forth in ii. 2–4, ix. 1–7, and xi. 1–9 show that his genius was by no means so narrowly circumscribed as some recent critics maintain, yet such eschatological ideas as belong in the proper sense to apocalyptic and to the chapters we are about to consider were foreign to him.

Modern critics are unanimous in denying the Isaianic authorship of this group of prophecies. In the last work written by the evangelical commentator Franz Delitzsch on Messianic Prophecy

2 abroad the inhabitants thereof. And it shall be, as with the people, so with the priest; as with the servant, so

---

(1890), pp. 143 foll., these chapters are placed after the Deutero-Isaiah as the 'great finale.' The question arises how far subsequent to the Deutero-Isaiah these oracles should be dated. The problem is complicated by the fact, which a narrow scrutiny of the original text discloses, and Duhm's analysis renders still clearer, that we have here a complex of varied fragments of a *prophetic* and in many cases distinctly *apocalyptic* character, and also of others *lyrical* in form. The passages which bear most clearly the apocalyptic impress are xxiv, xxv. 6–8, xxvi. 20, 21, and also xxvii. 1.

A general survey of the contents will now be given. A universal desolating judgment from God will befall the world, and the earth lies under the curse which the sins of its inhabitants have merited and called forth. The vines decay, joy ceases, the city is desolate (verses 1–12). There are premature rejoicings over the manifestations of Yahweh's power. In these the prophet is unable to share, for spoliation prevails, the earth's foundations shake (verses 13–20). An apocalyptic scene follows, utterly unlike any portrayal of the 'day of the Lord' in Isaiah (cf. ii. 12–21); on the other hand, closely resembling the scenes in the Book of Enoch, Fourth Esdras, or the Book of Revelation. The hostile powers in heaven and kings of the earth are to be punished and shut up in prison by Yahweh. Sun and moon shall be darkened. Yahweh's triumph is at hand, and He shall reign in Mount Zion (verses 21–23). Then is the proper season for song, and a lyrical passage follows in chap. xxv. The prosperity and blessing of the kingdom of Yahweh are described as a feast of fat things, and a season when death and sorrow pass away (xxv. 1–8). God, the deliverer long sighed for, shall come, and Moab's arrogance shall be laid low (verses 9–12). Another lyrical passage follows, a song of thanksgiving to God with which in Judah these happier days are greeted (xxvi. 1–12). The language and tone of this song remind us of the Psalms, and of Isa. xii, which is late. It belongs to an age when there was a church community, and we are evidently at an advanced date in the post-exilian period. In verses 13–19 we have a retrospect over Israel's past days in which successive rulers exercised lordship, presumably Egyptians, Syrians, Assyrians, Babylonians, and Persians. Should we also include the Greek rulers? In verse 19 (cf. verse 14) we have a note quite foreign to Isaiah and his times, viz. that of confident expectation that Yahweh's faithful dead shall arise. This doctrine of the resurrection is not so definitely expressed as in Dan. xii. 2, yet it is a clear evidence that we have here reached a much later stage in Jewish eschatological belief than in any preceding with his master; as with the maid, so with her mistress; as with the buyer, so with the seller; as with the lender,

---

chapter. Chapter xxvi closes with an apocalyptic passage in verses 20, 21, to which metre and style show that xxvii. 1 should also be assigned. God's world-judgment is to take place and the world-powers are to be chastised. Meanwhile God's faithful people are to keep themselves in secure retirement till the storm of Divine judgment is past. The remainder of chap. xxvii is a complex containing a brief song, descriptive of God's protective care for Israel his vineyard (cf. chap. v. 1 foll.), and His destruction of the thorns and thistles that oppose the progress of the vineyard. In future days the vineyard shall blossom and increase, and fill the world with fruit (verses 2–6). All the penalties suffered by Israel have only been for his good, while his enemies are destroyed. Lastly, God's people are to be gathered together from the Euphrates to the borders of Egypt to the worship of Yahweh 'in the holy mountain in Jerusalem.'

In the course of our survey we have noted many signs of later Hebrew thought. There are also obvious echoes of earlier literature. Isaiah's song of the vineyard (v. 1 foll.) is evidently the basis of xxvii. 2 foll., which may, indeed, contain other Isaianic elements. xxvii. 6 is like an echo of Hos. xiv. 6–8. When we turn to the *language* of these four chapters, we find abundant evidences, not only that the authorship could not be Isaianic, but that the style is that of a later period of literature. It is far less simple than that of the prophets of the eighth century. On the contrary, it is ornamental and artificial. We find an accumulation of almost synonymous words and phrases to enhance the effect. We have a threefold variation of phrase in xxiv. 4, 8, 19, making each verse somewhat cumbrous. Both in these verses and in xxiv. 16, xxv. 1, xxvi. 3, 5, 15, xxvii. 5 we note the characteristic repetition of a word. There is a fondness for rhymed endings (xxiv. 1, 8, 16, xxv. 1, 6 foll., xxvi. 2, 13, 20 foll., xxvii. 3, 5 in the original), and for alliterations accumulated together (xxiv. 1, 3 foll., 6, 13–19, xxv. 6, 10, xxvi. 3, xxvii. 7 in the Hebrew original). These and many indications of later style may be found by the student who can read German in Dillmann-Kittel's *Commentary*, pp. 217 foll.

To what time should we ascribe this group of prophecies? The answers given by recent critics vary considerably. The references to Mount Zion as 'this mountain' in xxv. 6, 7, 10 show that the writer was living in Judaea. Moreover, xxiv. 14 foll. prove that the writer was anticipating an issue of the Divine judgment over the kingdoms of the world which would be favourable to Israel, though not yet concluded. The people sigh for the downfall of heathendom and the advent of peace (xxvi passim). For God's

so with the borrower; as with the taker of usury, so with
3 the giver of usury to him. The earth shall be utterly

---

people are no longer faithless to Yahweh. National backsliding is regarded as a thing of the past (xxvi. 16 foll., xxvii. 9), from which the people have been thoroughly purged by disciplinary chastisement and sincere penitence. About the second year of Darius, Babylon, though captured by Cyrus (538 B. C.), had not yet been destroyed. The seventy years of Divine wrath over Judah were not yet completed, and fresh judgments on Babylon were expected (Zech. i. 12 foll., ii. 10). This situation agrees with xxvi. 1, as well as with Hag. ii. A further confirmation of this view is found in xxiv. 2, 23, where people and priests (and not *princes*) are compared, and the elders are regarded as the rulers (cf. Ezra x. 5). This is considered to reflect the social conditions of the early post-exilian period. These are the main grounds why these prophecies are assigned in Dillmann-Kittel's *Commentary* to the close of the sixth century in the post-exilian period. Certainly no earlier date is possible. On the other hand, Duhm places the date nearly four centuries later: 'Jerusalem lies in ruins; the hopes of the Jews living in the west, awakened by some event which is not mentioned, are not shared by the writer, who on the contrary expects the advent of the spoilers. The three world-powers are unfortunately only indicated by apocalyptic figures [xxvii. 1]. . . . I understand by these symbolic forms the Parthians, the Syrians, and the Egyptians. The first are referred to as 'the spoilers.' The writer has passed through the experience of the siege of Jerusalem by Antiochus Sidetes soon after the accession of John Hyrcanus (135 B. C.), and subsequently the beginning of the Parthian War, the unfortunate expedition of Antiochus VII in which the Jews were compelled to take part (129 B. C.). The unmentioned event over which the writer cannot rejoice with his compatriots is the overthrow of Antiochus, because it would become the occasion for the inroads of the Parthians. The writer belongs, by virtue of his unwarlike temperament, in all probability to the Chasidim.' Moreover, we have later interpolated passages: 'xxv. 1–5 refers to the destruction of Samaria by John Hyrcanus (between 113 and 105 B. C.); the mighty city is Rome. The same event is presupposed in xxvi. 1–19; xxv. 9–11 belongs to the time of Alexander Jannaeus.' These views of Duhm are as extreme on the one side as those of Dillmann-Kittel's *Commentary* on the other. The latter fail to take due account of the strong apocalyptic tendency and the later conceptions which these chapters manifest; the former make it very difficult to hold any consistent theory as to the close of the prophetic canon, the frame of which, according to Duhm's speculative dates, must have been a very loose one.

emptied, and utterly spoiled; for the LORD hath spoken this word. The earth mourneth and fadeth away, the 4 world languisheth and fadeth away, the lofty people of the earth do languish. The earth also is polluted under 5 the inhabitants thereof; because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, broken the everlasting

---

Accordingly, we prefer to place the date of these prophecies in the Greek period—approximately towards the beginning of the third century or end of the fourth. They may have referred to the historical crises which underlie the oracles of the Deutero-Zechariah (see Stade in *ZATW.*, 1881, 1882). If we follow the hint of Stade in his own *Zeitschrift*, 1882, pp. 298–306, dealing with Zech. ix–xiv, we might tentatively place them between 330 and 275 B.C. Cheyne would connect them with Alexander's capture of Tyre, 332 B.C. This is perhaps the correct conclusion.

CHAPTER XXIV.

Verses 1–3 contain a general announcement of a universal Divine judgment that shall desolate and depopulate the earth and revolutionize social conditions.

2. More literally, 'as the people, so the priest'; cf. Hos. iv. 9, where the same phrase occurs, which seems to have been proverbial. The parallels in the following clauses suggest that the priests are regarded as the ruling caste in this particular passage. Such they rapidly became in post-exilian Judaism. The verse shows how all classes would be involved in the judgment, so that there would be a general levelling of social grades.

3. Paronomasia or assonance plays a large part in the Hebrew original in this and the following verses.

Verses 4–12. Premonitory symptoms of the coming catastrophe are discerned by the prophet in the present. The world mourns, the vine decays, and corresponding to the languishing state of external nature there is the internal state of moral transgression and guilt. The city is desolate; mirth ceases.

4. for **lofty** read 'loftiest.'

5. The words here for **laws** (*tôrôth*[1]) and **everlasting covenant** are quite foreign to Isaiah. They point clearly to a time when the legislation of our Pentateuch had been long codified and was regarded with reverence and awe. 'Everlasting covenant' seems to be an echo of Gen. ix. 16 (Priestercodex).

---

[1] Isaiah uses the singular form *tôrah*, but only in the earlier and more primitive sense of 'instruction.' In i. 10 it stands in parallelism with the 'word of God' which comes to the prophet.

6 covenant. Therefore hath the curse devoured the earth,
and they that dwell therein are found guilty: therefore
the inhabitants of the earth are burned, and few men left.
7 The new wine mourneth, the vine languisheth, all the
8 merryhearted do sigh. The mirth of tabrets ceaseth, the
noise of them that rejoice endeth, the joy of the harp
9 ceaseth. They shall not drink wine with a song; strong
10 drink shall be bitter to them that drink it. The city of
confusion is broken down: every house is shut up, that
11 no man may come in. There is a crying in the streets
because of the wine; all joy is darkened, the mirth of the

---

6. are found guilty. In the original the verbal form signifies not only the incurring of guilt but also suffering the penalty for it. The curse is probably the effect of the pollution of blood which works with a magic potency, devouring the earth and its inhabitants like a disease.

7. We have a parallel to (perhaps an echo of) Joel i. 10, 12, 18. In the latter the conception of nature's decay is worked out in greater detail than here.

8. The **mirth of tabrets** would be the inevitable accompaniment of the vintage-season commemorated in the festival of Succôth (or Tabernacles); cf. Amos viii. 3, 10.

10. 'Wasteness' of R. V. marg. is the more correct rendering. The word is the same as that which describes the primaeval chaos in Gen. i. 2 (Priestercodex). The interpretation is by no means certain. Does the city mean Jerusalem (as Duhm and Marti assume), or are we to follow the hint of the LXX which render 'every city,' and take the word as collective and general, since the judgment from Yahweh is one which is to overtake the whole world (cf. verse 1)? This latter is the view of Kittel, and is supported by the latter clause of the verse. It is in fact very difficult to see what occasion any calamity to Jerusalem could give to Jewish rejoicing (verse 14 foll.).

11. because of the wine: i.e. the desolated vineyards; cf. xxxii. 12.

is darkened: *lit.* sinks into the darkness of evening; in other words, 'disappears' or 'ceases.' The latter is the rendering of the LXX (*πέπαυται*). There is, therefore, no need to alter the Hebrew text and render, as Marti proposes, 'has passed by' or 'passed away.'

land is gone. In the city is left desolation, and the gate 12
is smitten with destruction. For thus shall it be in the 13
midst of the earth among the peoples, as the shaking of
an olive tree, as the grape gleanings when the vintage is
done. These shall lift up their voice, they shall shout; 14
for the majesty of the LORD they cry aloud from the sea.
Wherefore glorify ye the LORD in the east, even the 15

---

12. is left, more accurately 'is left remaining,' a kind of oxymoron. **with destruction**, more correctly 'to ruins.' The reference of this description by Kittel to Babylon captured by Darius is just as arbitrary as the identification of the city with Jerusalem in verse 10 by Duhm. As Marti pertinently observes, the overthrow of Babylon would be no adequate occasion for depression or melancholy: cf. Ps. cxxxvii. 8 foll.

Verses 13-20. The prophet passes from the premonitory indications of the present to deal more definitely with the future.

13. In this verse we note an evident borrowing from the language of Isaiah's oracle, xvii. 6, where we have the same metaphor of the beating of the olive in the harvest, when a small remnant of berries only is left upon the topmost branches—symbolizing the small number who escape the Divine judgment.

14. Who are referred to by **these** (distinguished by special emphasis in the original)? The LXX appear to have had another text before them, since they render: 'Those who are left behind upon the earth shall rejoice. . . .' Duhm regards 'Those who are left behind upon the earth' as a mere interpretative paraphrase of the words in our text. But this is rendered somewhat doubtful by a careful examination of the Hebrew text itself, which might be a corruption of the purer text used by the LXX, and is moreover very obscure. Our LXX text seems to have combined our own Hebrew text with another purer text into one complete reading, which they render: 'These shall call out aloud, and those who are left behind upon the earth shall rejoice . . .'

Marti finds in the Hebrew pronoun rendered 'these' an emphatic contrast to the 'I' of the poet who speaks in verse 16. 'They are obviously Jews of the Diaspora in the west, whether on the coast of Asia Minor and the adjoining islands or even in Egypt. "These" regard the situation with different eyes from those of the writer.' Cf. verse 16. Dillmann's interpretation is similar.

15. The words of their rejoicing are here quoted.

in the east is usually rendered 'in the regions of light' (so Duhm). But text and interpretation are very uncertain. LXX omit it. Various expedients have been suggested in emendation name of the LORD, the God of Israel, in the isles of the sea.

16 From the uttermost part of the earth have we heard songs, glory to the righteous. But I said, I pine away, I pine away, woe is me! the treacherous dealers have dealt treacherously; yea, the treacherous dealers have
17 dealt very treacherously. Fear, and the pit, and the
18 snare, are upon thee, O inhabitant of the earth. And it shall come to pass, that he who fleeth from the noise of the fear shall fall into the pit; and he that cometh up out of the midst of the pit shall be taken in the snare: for the windows on high are opened, and the foundations
19 of the earth do shake. The earth is utterly broken, the earth is clean dissolved, the earth is moved exceedingly.
20 The earth shall stagger like a drunken man, and shall be moved to and fro like a hut; and the transgression thereof shall be heavy upon it, and it shall fall, and not rise again.

---

of the text, such as 'in the Nile-arms,' 'on the mountains,' &c., but the reading and interpretation 'light-regions,' = the eastern countries, commends itself, as it furnishes a satisfactory contrast to 'coast-lands of the west' (*lit.* 'of the sea') which immediately follows. Instead of **isles** read with R. V. marg. 'coast-lands.'

16. Like strains of rejoicing come from the 'borders of the earth'—Ethiopia or Persia it may be. But the poet regards the situation in quite other than exultant mood, and exclaims: 'I feel a wasting sickness, . . . woe is me! Traitors have dealt traitorously—treachery have the traitors traitorously dealt': note the accumulated iteration of the same word in varied forms—a rhetorical device of which our writer constantly avails himself.

18. Universal panic in the presence of the cataclysm of Divine judgment. Respecting the **windows on high**, or in the firmament, see Gen. vii. 11, and article 'Cosmogony' in Hastings' *DB.*

19. For **the earth is clean dissolved,** &c., we should substitute the more exact rendering—'the earth is shattered to pieces, the earth violently swayed to and fro.'

20. The **hut** or booth erected for the protection of the garden or vineyard was a slight structure made of wattles, reeds, or branches. See Cheyne's *SBOT.* (figure to illustrate Isa. i. 8). It would therefore sway about in a violent wind.

And it shall come to pass in that day, that the LORD 21
shall punish the host of the high ones on high, and the
kings of the earth upon the earth. And they shall be 22
gathered together, as prisoners are gathered in the pit,
and shall be shut up in the prison, and after many days

Verses 21-23. The apocalyptic form and colouring become yet more pronounced. We have a final judgment scene which greatly differs from the portrayals of Divine judgment presented by the prophet Isaiah. These latter are judgments limited to individual nations and groups of nations, and the horizons are those of the present age, and of the earth on which we dwell. But we are now introduced to a vaster world which includes the heavens as well as the earth, and to superhuman powers as well as human personalities.

21. Translate : 'the host of the height on the height.' We are moving among the more developed conceptions of later Jewish angelology. God's judgment or visitation will descend upon the evil powers called by St. Paul *ἀρχαί*, *δυνάμεις* or *κυριότητες* (Rom. viii. 38; Col. i. 16; Eph. i. 21) or *ἐξουσίαι ἐν τοίς ἐπουρανίοις* or *τοῦ ἀέρος* (Eph. iii. 10; ii. 2), 'the powers in heavenly places' or 'of the air.' We have analogous conceptions in the 'Ascension of Isaiah' and other apocalyptic Jewish works: see article 'Satan' in Hastings' *DB*. p. 411 (left-hand col.).

22. A very slight alteration of our Heb. text based on xxxiii. 4 saves it from the obtrusion of a strange form and makes scarcely any change in sense[1] (see Duhm and Marti). The imprisonment of the hostile angelic powers in a subterranean dungeon is an eschatological conception which meets us in the Book of Enoch (x. 6, 13; cf. 2 Pet. ii. 4, and Jude 6). See again Hastings' *DB*., vol. iv. p. 411 (left-hand col. *ad fin.*). Marti observes that we have here advanced considerably beyond the eschatology of Ezekiel. In the latter, as here, we have two acts in the drama. But in Ezekiel the second act consists in the final overthrow of Gog, which seems to be identical with certain predatory hordes from the north (Ezek. xxxix. 2). Here on the contrary, and in striking conformity with Enoch xci. 12-17, the conflict between Yahweh and the nations, and their final overthrow, constitute the *first* act in the drama, succeeded by an intermezzo which ushers

---

[1] The proper rendering of our Massoretic Hebrew text would be: 'shall be gathered into a gathering as prisoners . . .'; whereas the proposed emendation should be translated: 'and they shall be gathered (more accurately 'carried away') in a gathering of prisoners unto a pit.'

23 shall they be visited. Then the moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed; for the LORD of hosts shall reign in mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before his ancients gloriously.

25 O LORD, thou art my God; I will exalt thee, I will

---

in the final judgment of the hostile powers in heaven and on earth, and the creation of God's kingdom in glory. In these verses (21-23) we see clearly the main lineaments of the eschatology which forms the basis of the New Testament Apocalypse (which is mainly Jewish) in Rev. xx, xxi.

We thus observe two great stages in the development of Jewish eschatology. The *first* is constituted by the transition from Isaiah to Ezekiel, which is a transition from the national and partial to the universal. The external cause which contributed to this development was the Exile, which brought the Jew into contact with a more ancient and highly civilized race and into larger relations. The *second* is constituted by the transition from Ezekiel to the later Jewish apocalyptic; and the causes which contributed to its development were the slow operation of Persian and of Greek influence on Jewish religious ideas, which stimulated greatly the growth of angelology and permeated religious thought with conceptions of the transcendent and supramundane.

23. The **moon** and the **sun** (properly the 'sun-glow') are the chief representatives of the 'host of the height' overthrown by the might of Yahweh in the day of judgment. Both were sidereal representatives of heathen divinities now degraded to *demons.* Both now pale to darkness in the presence of the Divine glory. For Yahweh's kingdom in Zion has begun, and He shines with an everlasting light. Cf. Rev. xxi. 11.

be confounded . . . ashamed. The words used in the Heb. original are in reality synonyms, both of which signify 'be ashamed.' The last clause should be rendered 'and before His ancients in glory.' **ancients** mean simply 'elders,' and there is perhaps here a reminiscence of the glory which shone at Sinai before the seventy elders in the incident described in Exod. xxiv. 9-18.

CHAPTER XXV.

Both Duhm and Marti regard verses 1-5 as a song or psalm composed twenty years after the preceding chapter. The city to which reference is made in verse 2, as a fortress-city reduced to ruins, they identify with Samaria, completely destroyed between 111 and 107 B. C. by the sons of John Hyrcanus. We have already remarked on the extreme improbability of so late a date

praise thy name; for thou hast done wonderful things, *even* counsels of old, in faithfulness *and* truth. For 2
thou hast made of a city an heap; of a defenced city
a ruin: a palace of strangers to be no city; it shall
never be built. Therefore shall the strong people 3
glorify thee, the city of the terrible nations shall fear
thee. For thou hast been a strong hold to the poor, 4
a strong hold to the needy in his distress, a refuge
from the storm, a shadow from the heat, when the blast
of the terrible ones is as a storm against the wall. As 5

---

for any prophetic writing. Cheyne would identify the city with Tyre, captured by Alexander the Great in 332 B.C. This is intrinsically more probable, but appears to us too early a date. Perhaps it is not necessary to understand 'city' in verses 2 and 3 as special, but as collective. In Dillmann-Kittel's commentary the overthrow of Sidon by Artaxerxes Ochus is the event suggested as supplying the occasion for this song.

1. We seem to have here an echo of the phrase 'wondrous counsellor' in ix. 5 (Heb.) [6 R.V. and A.V.]. Accordingly it would be best to render:—

'For Thou hast executed wondrous counsels
Which from old have been truth in verity.'

2. The word for **palace** (*armôn*) might perhaps be more correctly rendered 'fortress.'

3. The 'violent' or 'despotic' nations mean pre-eminently those which have been hostile to the Jews. The expression seems to be an echo of Ezek. xxviii. 7, xxx. 11, xxxi. 12, xxxii. 12.

4. The translation of the LXX renders little help in this and the following verse, and is evidently based on an inferior and corrupted text. The interpretation of the last clause is uncertain. (*a*) It might be regarded as a temporal clause, as A.V. and R.V. take it, or as causal; we prefer the latter. (*b*) **storm against the wall** is strange and obscure. Does it mean a storm that *breaks down* walls, as Rashi, Gesenius, and Hitzig understand it? This is a stronger and more intelligible conception than the weak one of a storm *beating against the wall*. Far more probable is the slight change of text or, properly vocalization (adopted by Vitringa, Lowth, Duhm, and many others), involved in the reading *ḳôr* (instead of *ḳîr*), meaning 'winter.' Translate, therefore: 'For the blast of the violent ones is as a winter rain-storm.'

5. The language here is very elliptical, and recent commentators

the heat in a dry place shalt thou bring down the noise
of strangers; as the heat by the shadow of a cloud, the
6 song of the terrible ones shall be brought low. And in
this mountain shall the LORD of hosts make unto all
peoples a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees,
of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well
7 refined. And he will destroy in this mountain the face
of the covering that is cast over all peoples, and the veil
8 that is spread over all nations. He hath swallowed up
death for ever; and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears

are disposed to regard this verse, with the last clause of the preceding, as a prosaic gloss added to the Psalm. 'Like scorching heat in a dry place [by means of a cooling breeze] Thou bringest low the wild tumult of strangers; like scorching heat by means of a cloud's shadow He (i. e. Yahweh) subdues the triumphant song of the violent.'

6. Here the style and rhythm as well as general sense seem to follow in natural sequence upon chap. xxiv. **This mountain** in verses 6, 7 is the 'mount Zion' of xxiv. 23. The feast here described may be compared to that which is celebrated with sacrifices at the opening of a new reign 1 Sam. xi. 15 (Saul); 1 Kings i. 9, 25 (Adonijah). Translate: 'a banquet of rich dainties, a banquet of wine-lees, marrowy rich dainties, wine-lees refined.' By 'wine-lees' is meant the lees of wine left standing after fermentation[1].

7. Suffering and sorrow are to be put away. They are spoken of here as a covering perhaps in allusion to the custom of mourning apparel.

8. Even death is to be destroyed. LXX make **death** the subject of the sentence: 'Death hath devoured with prevailing power.' On the other hand, the version of Theodotion renders from off all faces; and the reproach of his people shall he take away from off all the earth: for the LORD hath spoken it.

---

[1] It is impossible in this commentary to go deeply into questions of text which presuppose an intimate acquaintance with Hebrew. An examination of the LXX clearly reveals the existence of another and much briefer Hebrew text. The beginning of verse 7 reads in the LXX: 'They shall anoint themselves with myrrh upon this mountain,' which has a certain aspect of probability, since it fits in with the context (cf. verse 6). The word for 'covering' in the original, viz. *lôṭ*, was read as *lōṭ*, i. e. *ladanum*, a fragrant resin obtained from the leaves of the *cistus villosus* known to the Assyrians (*ladunu*).

And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; 9
we have waited for him, and he will save us: this is
the LORD; we have waited for him, we will be glad
and rejoice in his salvation. For in this mountain shall 10
the hand of the LORD rest, and Moab shall be trodden
down in his place, even as straw is trodden down in the
water of the dunghill. And he shall spread forth his 11
hands in the midst thereof, as he that swimmeth spreadeth forth *his hands* to swim: and he shall lay low his

---

'Death has been swallowed up unto victory,' the Hebrew verb for 'destroy' (or in marg. R. V. 'swallow up') being pronounced as a passive (*Pual*). This is the reading and interpretation followed by St. Paul in 1 Cor. xv. 54. It gives an Aramaic force to the Heb. *lāneṣaḥ* ('for ever'), which LXX and Theodotion alike render 'unto (or into) victory.' The concluding part of the verse is echoed in Rev. xxi. 4.

Verses 9–12 might be called a song of praise to Yahweh for victory won and the hope that Moab will be overthrown.

9. A more idiomatic rendering would be:—

'Behold, there is our God
For whom we have waited, that He might help us;
There is Yahweh for whom we have waited;
Let us exult and be glad in His help.'

10. The last clause should be rendered 'as a heap of straw is trodden down amid a dung-heap.' The hostility between Moab and Judah was specially accentuated in the days of Nebuchadnezzar and king Jehoiaḳim (of Judah), when bands of Moabites united with the Ammonites and Syrians (or more probably *Edomites*) in overrunning the southern kingdom in conjunction with the Babylonian armies (2 Kings xxiv. 2). The Jews never forgot or forgave these outrages from sister-nations in the hour of their calamity (Jer. xlviii; Zeph. ii. 8–10; Ezek. xxv. 8 foll.). It is possible that **Moab** is a term here used as typical of a hostile nation.

11. Moab in his plight stretches out his hands to defend himself, like a swimmer struggling for life amid the waters. But all in vain; Yahweh frustrates his skilful strokes.

and he shall lay low . . . i. e. Yahweh. Perhaps with

12 pride together with the craft of his hands. And the
fortress of the high fort of thy walls hath he brought
down, laid low, and brought to the ground, even to the
dust.

26 In that day shall this song be sung in the land of
Judah: We have a strong city; salvation will he appoint
2 for walls and bulwarks. Open ye the gates, that the
righteous nation which keepeth truth may enter in.
3 Thou wilt keep *him* in perfect peace, *whose* mind *is*

Delitzsch and R.V. (marg.) we should render the last clause: 'despite the skilful strokes of his hands.'

12. 'Yea, thy steep towering walls hath He cast down, brought low, levelled to the earth, even to the dust.' Notice, again, the characteristic accumulation of phrase.

CHAPTER XXVI.

Another song of rejoicing at victory over foes and of thankful trust in God. Duhm consistently follows his theory of the late authorship of these chapters, and sees here, in the reference to the strong walls of Jerusalem (verse 1) and the humiliation of another city (verse 5), as well as to the increase of the people's population and territory (verse 15), clear allusions to the time when John Hyrcanus had newly strengthened the defences of Jerusalem and had destroyed Samaria. In other words, the song refers to events immediately past or enacting. Kittel, on the other hand, refers the whole poem to the future. This latter view is confirmed by the closing verses. The poem seems to be crowded with assonances and plays on words[1] (cf. verse 3).

1. that day probably refers back to the preceding verses xxv. 10 foll., viz. the time of Moab's downfall. The last clause should be rendered: 'as protection (or help) he sets walls and bulwarks.' The word *ḥêl*, rendered 'bulwark,' properly signifies a *glacis* or rampart placed in front of the actual fortress-wall (Greek *προτείχισμα*).

2. 'keeping truth,' i. e. preserving its fidelity to the God of the Covenant.

3. The original is far from clear. Probably, omitting the second word for **peace**[2], we should render: 'A disposition firmly

---

[1] So Duhm; but see below, the remarks on verse 3.

[2] The repetition of the word 'peace' (*shâlôm*) in the original is considered to express emphasis (a characteristic Hebrew usage), and

stayed *on thee*: because he trusteth in thee. Trust ye in 4
the LORD for ever: for in the LORD JEHOVAH is an ever-
lasting rock. For he hath brought down them that 5
dwell on high, the lofty city: he layeth it low, he layeth
it low even to the ground; he bringeth it even to the
dust. The foot shall tread it down; even the feet of 6
the poor, and the steps of the needy. The way of the 7
just is uprightness: thou that art upright dost direct the

---

established Thou keepest in peace' (so Delitzsch); but there are many other interpretations. Some (as Dillmann and Guthe) would connect it with the preceding (verse 2), and would break up the verse thus: 'Their mind (viz. of those who are righteous and keep truth') is firmly established; thou wilt keep peace—a very clumsy sentence. In any case the repetition of the word for 'peace' (*shālôm*) in our Hebrew text is a difficulty. But there are other grounds for suspecting the text, and a comparison with the LXX, who render 'taking hold of truth and maintaining peace' (which forms a natural sequence to verse 2), leads us in some instances to see in what Duhm calls 'assonances and plays on words' nothing more than expansions of the text due to dittography or to conflate reading. The last clause of the verse may be rendered 'for in Thee it (i. e. the disposition) trusts'; but the LXX in their rendering show that we ought to begin the next verse with this concluding clause. Connect it, therefore, with verse 4, and with a slight emendation of text render as follows: 'For in thee, O Lord, they have assuredly trusted for ever.'

4. Duhm is certainly right in following the LXX by omitting the words **in the LORD.** Accordingly render: 'For Yahweh is an everlasting rock.'

5 repeats the phraseology of xxv. 12.

6. Comparison with the LXX indicates that the repetition **foot . . . feet** is due to a conflate reading or combination of variants. Probably the word 'feet' should be deleted, and we should translate: 'The foot of the poor shall tread it down' (so Duhm).

7. Instead of **thou that art upright** translate: 'Thou dost level straight the track of the righteous.' The language of the song here becomes proverbial or gnomic.

---

is thus rendered in R. V. by '*perfect* peace.' The word rendered 'mind' or 'disposition' (Skinner), occurring in Gen. vi. 5, viii. 21; Deut. xxxi. 21; 1 Chron. xxviii. 9, xxix. 18, is especially employed in this sense in later Hebrew.

8 path of the just. Yea, in the way of thy judgements, O
LORD, have we waited for thee; to thy name and to thy
9 memorial is the desire of our soul. With my soul have
I desired thee in the night; yea, with my spirit within
me will I seek thee early: for when thy judgements are
in the earth, the inhabitants of the world learn righteous-
10 ness. Let favour be shewed to the wicked, yet will he
not learn righteousness; in the land of uprightness will
he deal wrongfully, and will not behold the majesty of
the LORD.

11 LORD, thy hand is lifted up, yet they see not: but
they shall see *thy* zeal for the people, and be ashamed;
yea, fire shall devour thine adversaries. LORD, thou
12 wilt ordain peace for us: for thou hast also wrought all
13 our works for us. O LORD our God, other lords beside
thee have had dominion over us; but by thee only will

---

8. For **memorial,** which is misleading, read 'praise.' The soul yearns for God's glory. The writer was evidently familiar with Hebrew literature, especially Hos. xii. 6, xiv. 8; Ps. vi. 6, cii. 13, where the same word is used in the sense of 'praise,' 'glory.'

9. With R. V. marg., render 'seek thee diligently.'

10. The first clause should be translated as conditional: 'If the wicked be treated with favour, he learneth not justice.' Also render by present tenses, 'dealeth wrongfully, . . . beholdeth . .'

11. Similarly render: 'Though Thy hand hath been raised, yet they behold not. May they be dumbfounded as they behold the zeal for a people [i. e. Yahweh's zeal on behalf of His faithful Israel]; yea, may the fire kindled against Thine adversaries devour them.' The 'raising of Yahweh's hand' refers to His deliverances of Israel (i. e. Israel's victories) in the past.

12. Render: 'mayest thou ordain.' The verbal form is jussive or optative, as in verse 11.

13. The latter part of this verse seems hardly to admit of any legitimate construction. It is best, therefore, with Duhm to assume that the line is defective, a view which the LXX version confirms. Render, therefore, the latter part of the verse as two clauses, a portion of the first being lost: 'Only in Thee . . . we will make mention of (i. e. praise) Thy name.' This verse, as we have already observed on p. 270, in the Introduction to this

we make mention of thy name. *They are* dead, they 14
shall not live ; *they are* deceased, they shall not rise :
therefore hast thou visited and destroyed them, and
made all their memory to perish. Thou hast increased 15
the nation, O LORD, thou hast increased the nation ;
thou art glorified : thou hast enlarged all the borders of
the land.

LORD, in trouble have they visited thee, they poured 16
out a prayer *when* thy chastening was upon them.

---

group of oracles, presupposes a long retrospect of past history. The **other lords** who have exercised dominion over Israel are the Egyptians, Syrians, Assyrians, Babylonians, Persians, and perhaps the Greeks since 330 B. C.

14. More correctly translated : 'The dead shall not live, nor will shades (*manes*) arise.' The reference here is to the ancient lords of verse 13, who have now passed away, and no longer exercise dominion. They 'leave not a rack' behind.

15. While these old enemies of Israel have perished, Israel itself has prospered.

The perfects here cannot be rationally interpreted as prophetic perfects (as Delitzsch, Orelli, and others propose).

thou art glorified is not so accurate a rendering of the original as 'Thou hast glorified Thyself.'

thou hast enlarged, *lit.* 'Thou hast put far off,' i. e. hast extended (the frontiers of the land). The reference is here to Israel's past—especially in the days of David and Solomon.

16. Render with R.V. (marg.) 'in trouble they looked for (or sought for) Thee.' The rest of this verse is difficult. R.V. gives perhaps as good a rendering as can be extorted from the Hebrew text as it stands, though it is extremely doubtful whether *lahash*, which properly means an incantation (or magical amulet), can bear the signification of **prayer.** By a slight change in punctuation Koppe and Dillmann, followed by other commentators, including Duhm, obtain the rendering : 'The constraint of magic was Thy chastisement unto them.' Magic played a considerable part in the lives of all ancient peoples—particularly in Babylonia (cf. xlvii. 12 foll.) and Egypt ; even the Jews were deeply infected with it, sorcery being chiefly carried on by women, as a graphic passage in Ezek. xiii. 18 foll. clearly shows. This was God's chastisement to His people. This is, it must be confessed, a far-fetched conception, and the original Hebrew word for 'constraint'

17 Like as a woman with child, that draweth near the time of her delivery, is in pain and crieth out in her pangs;
18 so have we been before thee, O LORD. We have been with child, we have been in pain, we have as it were brought forth wind; we have not wrought any deliverance in the earth; neither have the inhabitants of the
19 world fallen. Thy dead shall live; my dead bodies shall arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in the dust:

---

is an assumed form. Accordingly more drastic emendations of the text have been attempted, (*a*) by Cheyne, who would read the first person plural, as in verses 17 foll.: 'In stress we sought Thee, cried out because of oppression when Thy chastisement was upon us.' (*b*) Houbigant's attempt does not carry emendation so far, since the verb remains in third person plural: 'They cried out because Thy chastisement oppressed them.' These are the best endeavours to deal with a very problematic verse.

17. The stress of discipline through which God's people, the Jews, were passing is portrayed in another graphic simile: 'As a pregnant woman that comes near to giving birth writhes, cries out in her pangs.' The metaphor frequently occurs in the O. T. Cf. Hos. xiii. 13; Mic. iv. 10, &c.

18 is another difficult verse. But in the present case the text is more fully sustained by the LXX. Probably we ought to lighten it by dropping out the Hebrew word for **as it were,** which seems to be a corruption. It would be safest to follow the R.V. rendering. The last clause, **neither have the inhabitants of the world fallen,** is a strange form of expression. Here, however, 'have fallen' is to be taken in the sense of 'have been born.' There is warrant for such a meaning for the Hebrew verb, which properly signifies 'fall.' Cf. the Greek καταπίπτειν in Wisd. of Sol. vii. 3; see also the following verse. This usage seems to be a late one. The general drift of the passage is that there is a paucity of inhabitants in Palestine: cf. xxiv. 10-12 above. The imperfect tenses in Hebrew express the idea of permanence in misfortune. The use of the word **wind** for 'vanity,' 'emptiness,' 'nothingness' is not infrequent: Hos. xii. 1 (2 in Heb.); Eccles. i. 14; Isa. xli. 29.

19. A clear intimation of a belief in the Resurrection. Not a prayer (as Kittel takes it), but a confident expectation (so Delitzsch, Orelli, and Duhm). It expresses 'the contrast between vain human endeavours and the potent Divine aid which forms the dominating thought of verses 15-18' (Marti).

for thy dew is *as* the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast forth the dead.

Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and 20
shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself for a little
moment, until the indignation be overpast. For, be- 21
hold, the LORD cometh forth out of his place to punish
the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity: the earth
also shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover
her slain.

In that day the LORD with his sore and great and 27

---

herbs (cf. 2 Kings iv. 39) is a misleading interpretation of the original. Render :—

'Dew of lights is Thy dew, and the earth shall bring shadows to the birth.'

'Dew of lights' signifies dew from the uppermost heavenly regions where Yahweh, Lord of Life, dwells: cf. Ps. civ. 2; Dan. ii. 22, and also Enoch li. 1, 2. Here the causative of the Hebrew verb for 'fall' is employed in a sense corresponding to that in the preceding verse ('have been born').

xxvi. 20—xxvii. 1. These verses, as well as the general contents of chap. xxvii, confirm the view taken of the preceding poem (chap. xxvi), that it refers to the future and not to events which are immediately past or already enacting.

20. God's people are advised to retire into seclusion and await the consummation of God's judgments. The conceptions are somewhat parallel to Matt. xxiv. 16-20. The language becomes thoroughly apocalyptic in tenour.

21. The Lord descends (strictly 'goes forth') from His place (viz. in the heavenly heights) to visit the iniquities of the inhabitants of the earth upon them. We here recur to a corresponding apocalyptic portrayal of judgment to that which is contained in xxiv. 18-23. In the latter passage hostile angelic powers and kings of the earth are also punished (xxiv. 21 foll.). To this we have a correlate in the leviathans and dragon of the present passage (xxvii. 1).

CHAPTER XXVII.

This chapter is a patchwork of fragments.

1 evidently belongs to the apocalyptic series of verses 20, 21 of the preceding chapter.

For **sore** we had better substitute either 'relentless,' 'ruthless,' strong sword shall punish leviathan the swift serpent, and leviathan the crooked serpent; and he shall slay the dragon that is in the sea.

2, 3 In that day: A vineyard of wine, sing ye unto it. I

---

or 'unbending' (in reference to its material). The identification of the three animal forms here presented is a matter of conjecture, and commentators have differed widely as to the precise identification to be adopted. Nearly all, however, are agreed that national world-powers are meant, and not the supernatural powers 'of the height' represented by constellations, as xxiv. 21, to which we have referred as a parallel, might suggest in combination with Job xxvi. 12, 13. Rather should we bring the 'kings of the earth' in xxiv. 21 into comparison with the present passage.

The **dragon** (*tannîn*) **that is in the sea** is evidently the *Crocodile*, which represents as a symbolic form Egypt or its Pharaoh. This is fairly clear from general O.T. usage—Ezek. xxix. 3, xxxii. 2; Isa. li. 9; Ps. lxxxiv. 13, and other passages. The 'sea' here means the 'Nile,' as in xix. 5; Nah. iii. 8. More difficult of identification are the two shapes called **leviathan.** The term leviathan as the name of a mythical monster meets us not infrequently in the O. T. literature of the Exile period and subsequently. Its origin is probably to be found in the old Semitic Babylonian legend of *Tiâmat*, the female dragon-personification of the chaotic dark watery depth which in the Babylonian creation-epic comes into conflict with Marduk god of light, and is slain by him, and whose body forms the material out of which the firmament is made. See article 'Cosmogony' in Hastings' *DB.*, p. 505, and Gunkel, *Schöpfung und Chaos*, pp. 45 foll. The same ancient Babylonian legend is reflected in the conception of Rahab pierced or hewn in pieces by Yahweh (Isa. li. 9). What is specially meant by the 'flying serpent' here (a phrase which is an evident echo of the same Isaianic expression in xiv. 29), or by the enigmatic figure of the 'coiled (or twisted) serpent,' it is impossible to determine. It is most improbable that either Assyria or Babylonia is meant. If the view adopted in this commentary as to the probable date of this group of chapters be correct, both these powers were historically too remote in the past to come into consideration here. The former might possibly designate the Persian and the latter the Greek empire, as Hilgenfeld suggests. We are disposed, however, to regard even the Persian empire as lying too far in the past.

Verses 2-6 are a lyrical idyll of Israel, Yahweh's vineyard, which reminds us strongly of Isa. v. 1-5, and suggests the possibility that we have here in verses 2, 3 a genuine Isaianic fragment woven the LORD do keep it; I will water it every moment: lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day. Fury is 4 not in me: would that the briers and thorns were against me in battle! I would march upon them, I

---

into the texture of apocalyptic. Verse 6 is certainly an addendum. The original poem, therefore, seems to be contained in verses 2-5, constituting, according to Duhm's arrangement, two stanzas of six short lines each. Very grave problems arise in connexion with it. (1) Its presence embedded in this chapter. It is quite irrelevant to the context. Both with the brief apocalyptic section which precedes and with the strange conglomerate of verses which follow it has absolutely no connexion[1]. (2) The LXX rendering here, as in the entire chapter, raises very serious questions as to text. Yet it can hardly be doubted that the original Hebrew which underlay that version was a debased copy.

2, 3. We had better adopt the sounder text here which the LXX suggest (as also the Targum) and is to be found in some MSS. The alteration of the original *ḥemer*, 'ferment-wine,' to *ḥemed*, 'pleasure,' is very slight, and has innumerable parallels in other O.T. passages (cf. above, pp. 114 note, 156, &c.). So Ewald, Delitzsch, Duhm, and Marti (and also R.V. marg.). Render therefore:

> 'A charming vineyard, sing unto it;
> I Yahweh am keeping it,
> Every moment am watering it;
> Lest its leafage be missing
> Night and day do I guard it.'

In the last line but one of this rendering a very plausible emendation has been adopted, which certainly relieves the construction.

4. A difficult and obscure verse. LXX, followed by Peshiṭto, read the Hebrew for 'fury' (or 'wrath') as another word with different vowels rendered 'wall,' which Grätz-Bredenkamp would adopt, but no satisfactory sense is thereby obtained. On the other hand it seems best with Duhm to connect this clause 'Wrath I have not' with the preceding. The writer evidently had chap. v. 1 foll. in mind; but here a sharp contrast in Yahweh's feeling towards Israel is to be noted. In chap. v. 5 foll. (cf. Ezek. xvii. 9 foll.) Yahweh turns in bitter disappointment upon His vineyard, Israel, which had so completely disappointed all His watchful care and His fond hopes. Chastisement is to come upon Israel for wicked disobedience.

---

[1] Perhaps the simplest solution of this difficulty would be to assume (with Duhm) that between verse 1 and verse 6 there was a lacuna in the text or perhaps an illegible gap. This was filled up by this brief poem, which can scarcely be said to be apocalyptic in character.

5 would burn them together. Or else let him take hold of my strength, that he may make peace with me; *yea*,
6 let him make peace with me. In days to come shall Jacob take root; Israel shall blossom and bud: and they shall fill the face of the world with fruit.
7 Hath he smitten him as he smote those that smote

It is quite otherwise here. Israel has learned his lesson, and the days of wrath are past. 'Wrath have I none.'

In what immediately follows it would be best to desert the Massoretic accents of our Hebrew text (with Delitzsch and Cheyne). Accordingly render:—

> 'Let one give me[1] thorns, thistles!
> In war would I march against them (*lit.* 'it'),
> Would set them on fire together'—

meaning that if there be obstacles to Israel's progress (like thorns or thistles in the vineyard), e.g. heathen dwellers in the land or foreign invaders, I will attack them and burn them like stubble. The expression 'in war' breaks through the metaphor and describes the reality which the metaphor is intended to cover.

5 contemplates another possibility:—

> 'Or should one take hold of my strong defence,
> Let him make peace with me,
> Let him make peace with me.'

The language is very obscure. The meaning seems to be that if any of the heathen, opponents of God's people, desire to take refuge in the covenant blessings of His kingdom, they may make peace with Him. Thus the verse forms a natural sequence to verse 4. Marti attempts a reconstruction of the text on the basis of the LXX, but it is difficult to see any satisfactory result.

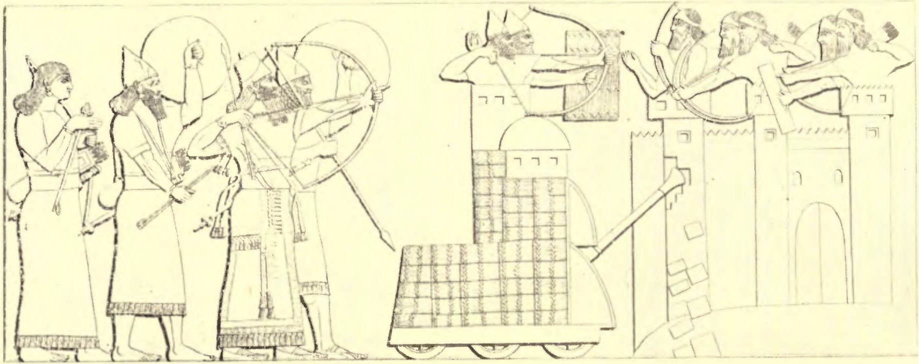
6 is evidently an addendum descriptive of Israel's future growth and prosperity.

Verses 7–11 are beset with difficulties. They have no connexion with verses 2–6, and moreover their internal coherency is far from clear: verse 8 has no grammatical connexion apparently with verse 7, and is placed by Duhm and Cheyne as a sequence to verse 10.

7 begins abruptly, without any indication of subject or object. We may assume, however, that the subject is Yahweh, and the

---

[1] In the original it is the expression of a wish = 'Would that there were'—equivalent to a strongly-emphasized condition (Gesenius-Kautzsch, *Hebrew Grammar* ^{26}, § 151 ^{a}, ^{b}).



From Layard's "Nineveh"

ASSYRIAN KING BESIEGING A CASTLE: THE BATTERING RAM MAKING A BREACH IN THE WALLS

him? or is he slain according to the slaughter of them that were slain by him? In measure, when thou sendest 8
her away, thou dost contend with her; he hath removed *her* with his rough blast in the day of the east wind.

object His own people Israel referred to in verse 9 (Jacob). Inserting the missing subject and object into our rendering to give it clearness, it would read thus:—

'Hath Yahweh smitten His people, as He hath smitten
him who smote them,
Or were they slain like the slaughtering of him who
slew them?'

We have here altered the vowel points in several instances. This we will explain in one case: i. e. the Hebrew word for 'him who slew them' is an active instead of a passive participle (as the Massoretic Hebrew text makes it). This re-establishes the parallelism ('him who smote them . . .' 'him who slew them'). This has the support, moreover, of the LXX and Pesh.

The answer to the question is of course 'No.' Yahweh has not inflicted such chastisement on Israel as He has upon Israel's foe, who in time past dealt so hardly with Israel.

8. The interpretation of this verse is so difficult and uncertain that no attempt will be made to discuss all the details. Render: 'Scaring[1], driving her forth, He[2] came into conflict with her; cast her forth with His ruthless blast in the day of the east wind.'

her in this verse cannot be explained as a reference to a divorced wife (cf. l. 1) as Dillmann-Kittel's commentary violently assumes. The most probable explanation is that the verse has been displaced, and we have in the feminine here a reference to the 'city' of verse 10, which is Jerusalem, the inhabitants of which have been driven into exile and subjected to disciplinary chastisements. The reference is to Divine dealings in the past. The **east wind** refers to the Eastern peoples, Assyrians and Babylonians more especially. On the metaphor cf. Hos. xiii. 15; Jer. xviii. 17.

---

[1] We have (with most recent authorities) taken this as an infinitive form in Hebrew from a verb signifying 'to urge on' animals (with the cry used by the Arabs *sâ-a*). The rendering 'according to measure,' adopted by Aq., Sym., Vulg., Targ. (as though the word was to be connected with the *seah* measure), is obviously inappropriate and certainly doubtful as to language.

[2] We prefer to follow the LXX and read the third person instead of the second. 'He' of course means Yahweh.

9 Therefore by this shall the iniquity of Jacob be purged, and this is all the fruit of taking away his sin; when he maketh all the stones of the altar as chalkstones that are beaten in sunder, *so that* the Asherim and the sun-
10 images shall rise no more. For the defenced city is solitary, an habitation deserted and forsaken, like the wilderness: there shall the calf feed, and there shall he
11 lie down, and consume the branches thereof. When the boughs thereof are withered, they shall be broken off; the women shall come, and set them on fire: for it is a people of no understanding; therefore he that made them will not have compassion upon them, and he that formed them will shew them no favour.

12 And it shall come to pass in that day, that the LORD shall beat off *his fruit*, from the flood of the River unto

---

9 does not follow unnaturally on verse 8. The discipline is not without effect. 'Therefore in this the iniquity of Jacob shall be expiated, and this shall be the entire removal of his sin, when he makes all the altar-stones like battered lime-stones, while Asherahs and sun-pillars no longer stand.' The word **this** in both clauses points to the temporal or conditional sentence, 'when he (i.e. Jacob) makes all the altar-stones,' &c., Israel will destroy all traces of heathen worship, and by this act will show that his iniquity is completely expiated. On Ashērah see note on xvii. 8, and on sun-pillar see article 'Pillar' in Hastings' *DB*.

10. The original Hebrew for **consume the branches** in the last clause is very unusual. Duhm attempts to amend the text, but it is safer to accept it as it stands. For the future tense 'shall feed' . . . 'shall lie down,' substitute the present 'feed,' 'lie down.' The events here described are God's judgments on Jerusalem before and during the Exile to which verse 8 also alludes. The passage seems to be an echo of the Isaianic oracles (v. 17, xxxii. 13, 14) respecting the future of Judah and Jerusalem.

11. Here also the future tenses should be changed into *present*: 'are broken off . . . come . . . has no compassion on them . . . shows them no favour.'

Verses 12, 13 bring this apocalyptic section to a close. The great diaspora of the Jewish race throughout Egypt and Western Asia are to be gathered together. The metaphor used is that of beating the brook of Egypt, and ye shall be gathered one by one, O ye children of Israel.

And it shall come to pass in that day, that a great 13
trumpet shall be blown; and they shall come which were ready to perish in the land of Assyria, and they that were outcasts in the land of Egypt; and they shall worship the LORD in the holy mountain at Jerusalem.

[I] Woe to the crown of pride of the drunkards of 28

---

out the grain from the ears. The rendering **from the flood** (Ps. lxix. 2, 15 [Heb. 3, 16]) is misleading. Render: 'Yahweh shall beat out from the *ears* of the River [Euphrates] unto the brook of Egypt.' **River** was the standing Hebrew name for the Euphrates. **the brook of Egypt** is the well-known Wady el Arish (LXX Rhinocorura).

12. one by one: *lit.* 'one to the other'; with care for each individual that not one may be lost. A characteristic touch anticipatory of much that is most precious in the Gospels. The same conception is reinforced in the concluding verse. The great trumpet is blown (cf. Zech. ix. 14, in later apocalyptic it constantly appears; Matt. xxiv. 31; 1 Cor. xv. 52; 1 Thess. iv. 16; Rev. viii. 9).

13. For **which were ready to perish**, read with R.V. (marg.) 'the lost,' the Jewish exiles in the foreign land who have gone astray, and were in danger of losing their nationality and membership as sharers in Israel's covenant blessings. These have now their privileges assured to them in the Divine kingdom of which Zion is the centre. Cf. xxiv. 23, xxv. 6 foll.; Zech. xiv. 16 foll.

CHAPTERS XXVIII—XXXII.

We now come to a cycle of prophetic discourses in which God's great purpose concerning Zion is thrown into sharp contrast with the foolish schemes of the politicians in Jerusalem. This is unfolded in the first chapter of the series (chap. xxviii), in which, after threatening Samaria with the disaster which is soon to befall her, and a scathing denunciation of her drunken aristocracy, the prophet turns his rebuke upon Judah's religious leaders, both priest and prophet (verses 7 foll.), whom he convicts of similar vices of intemperance. In verse 16 the definite purpose of Yahweh is announced that He has laid in Zion 'a tried stone, a corner-stone of precious solid foundation.' That the opening verses of this chapter were uttered by Isaiah while Samaria was

Ephraim, and to the fading flower of his glorious beauty, which is on the head of the fat valley of them that are

---

still standing, and not long before the investing armies of the Assyrians surrounded the city, may be regarded as certain. This fixes the date as about 725 B.C., not many months after the remarkable deliverance of the prophet (ix. 7—x. 4, v. 25-30), which is also directed against Ephraim. But it is not by any means so certain that xxviii. 7 foll. belong to so early a date. This question will be considered later. It is, on the other hand, almost certain that chaps. xxix-xxxii belong to a date considerably later, when Judah was seriously imperilled by Assyria, and the siege of Jerusalem was felt to be impending (xxix. 1, xxxiii. 10). Ḥezekiah at that time must have definitely adopted the policy of revolt from Assyria and alliance with Egypt. We know that alliance with Egypt had become the policy of the Palestinian states in 711 B.C. (cf. chap. xx and notes); but, as we have already pointed out, it was not till 708 B.C. that Egypt recovered from its weakness, and was in a position to render any effective aid against the encroachments of Assyria. It is, therefore, fairly certain that chaps. xxix-xxxii belong to the early years of Sennacherib's reign, 705-702 B.C.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

We are reminded of the prophetic warnings of Amos addressed to the luxurious nobles, 'who trust in Samaria's mount,' who recline on ivory divans, and postpone the evil day (Amos vi. 1, 3, 4). There is no evidence, however, that Isaiah was acquainted with this oracle discoverable in the internal indications of his own prophecy in this chapter. Probably not less than twelve years separated the time when the older prophet uttered his warnings from the time when the younger pronounced with yet greater clearness the doom of Ephraim's fortress city.

xxviii. 1-4. In these verses we have two seven-lined strophes. In verses 3 and 4 (beginning) at the opening of the second strophe the phrases which commence the first recur. We note that the interjection Ah! (Woe!), which so frequently stands in Isaiah's oracles at the beginning of a new strophe (v. 8-22 repeatedly, x. 1, 5), occurs at the beginning of this oracle (similarly xxix. 1, 15, xxx. 1, xxxi. 1).

1. The drinking habits of the wealthy in Samaria resembled the vices of the upper classes in contemporary Jerusalem (cf. v. 11, 12, 22). The 'proud crown' here is probably the circle of towers which girdled Samaria, a town not only of great natural strength but also of great beauty. Cf. Byron's description of Venice and her 'tiara of proud towers'; the parallel clause shows

overcome with wine! Behold, the Lord hath a mighty 2
and strong one; as a tempest of hail, a destroying storm,
as a tempest of mighty waters overflowing, shall he cast
down to the earth with the hand. The crown of pride 3
of the drunkards of Ephraim shall be trodden under
foot: and the fading flower of his glorious beauty, which 4
is on the head of the fat valley, shall be as the firstripe
fig before the summer; which when he that looketh
upon it seeth, while it is yet in his hand he eateth it up.
[**R**] In that day shall the LORD of hosts be for a crown of 5

---

us that we are to picture the crown as a floral wreath, 'the fading flower of his beauteous array.' The prophet describes Samaria as the head of a drunken reveller, encircled with a wreath of fading flowers. Probably the appearance of the city easily leant itself to this conception; a solitary, round, terraced hill standing in a fertile valley, Bädeker, *Palestine and Syria*^{2}, p. 224.

The construction of the last clause in the original is complicated. Kittel is disposed to omit the expression 'fertile valley' (*lit.* 'valley of fatness') as a phrase that has crept into the text from its proper place in verse 4. He would therefore simplify the construction by merely reading 'on the head of those who are overcome (or smitten) with wine.' Most commentators adhere to the text. Kittel's proposed omission has no support in the LXX.

2. as a tempest of hail probably introduces a relative clause, and we should render 'one who like a hail-storm . . . casts down to the ground with violence.' The R. V. (marg.) rightly substitutes the idiomatic translation 'with violence' for the literal **with the hand.** The prophet is prone to this vivid description of an Assyrian invasion, as an overflowing, devastating flood, cf. viii. 7, 8. The 'mighty and strong one' is obviously Assyria personified.

4. Translate 'as an early ripe fig before the harvest,' which was esteemed a great delicacy. It ripens in June, whereas the rest come to maturity in August (Hos. ix. 10; Mic. vii. 1). It is so much sought after that no sooner is it seen than it is greedily devoured. The fate of Samaria is to be quickly consummated. As a matter of history, we know that Assyria did not succeed in devouring Samaria in quite so summary a fashion. Its siege lasted two years (2 Kings xviii. 10).

Verses 5, 6. Two verses follow prefaced by the formula to which the student of Isaiah has now become accustomed, **in that day.** It

glory, and for a diadem of beauty, unto the residue of
6 his people: and for a spirit of judgement to him that
sitteth in judgement, and for strength to them that turn
7 back the battle at the gate. [I] But these also have erred
through wine, and through strong drink are gone astray;
the priest and the prophet have erred through strong
drink, they are swallowed up of wine, they are gone
astray through strong drink; they err in vision, they

is very improbable that they were written by Isaiah[1]. Most recent critics, including Duhm, Hackmann, Cheyne, Kittel, and Marti, are agreed that they were added later, perhaps by the collector of this small group of prophecies (so Duhm), who may also have included chap. xxxiii. It is a 'Messianic pendant' (Skinner). Samaria's fortress—'the proud crown'—has fallen, but Yahweh Himself will be the true glory of His people. Marti compares a like pendant in iv. 2-6, a message of comfort to stricken Jerusalem, whose plight is portrayed in the verses that precede (iii. 24—iv. 1).

6. turn back the battle *to* **the gate.** The conception is that the enemy have penetrated into the town and are driven back to and out of the town gates once more by the valour of the inhabitants.

Verses 7-22. We are once more in an Isaianic passage. Verses 7-13 are a denunciation of priests and prophets whom Isaiah seems to have surprised at some sacrificial banquet in a state of gross intoxication. Verses 14-22 are addressed to the political leaders. Whether verses 14 foll. belong to the same date as the preceding verses is very doubtful. The mention of the 'scourge' can only refer to the strong apprehension of an Assyrian invasion. This can hardly apply to any date earlier than 711, and may be even later. On the other hand, it is quite possible that verses 7-13 were composed at a considerably earlier time, i.e. in the reign of Aḥaz.

7. 'And these also go astray through wine,' i.e. wander about aimlessly in their intoxication. For **are gone astray** in the second clause in the R.V. read (with the marg.) 'stagger.' 'And these *also*' evidently points back to the drunkards of Ephraim in verse 1; the pronoun **these** points to the priest and prophet in the following

---

[1] It is quite true that many of the words are such as Isaiah uses, but this is partly due to the fact that the passage is based on what precedes. The writer evidently studied Isaiah's oracles. Hence the words 'crown,' 'glory,' 'beauty,' 'residue' are Isaianic, but the word for 'diadem' is only found in Ezek. vii. 7, 10.

stumble in judgement. For all tables are full of vomit 8
and filthiness, *so that there is* no place *clean*. Whom 9
will he teach knowledge? and whom will he make to
understand the message? them that are weaned from
the milk, and drawn from the breasts? For it is precept 10
upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line,

---

line. There is evidently no connexion between this verse and verses 5, 6. Render: 'They have gone astray through strong drink, and through wine wander distraught[1].'

The **judgment** here referred-to means the decision given by the priest, to whom appeal was made in difficult cases (Exod. xxii. 8; 1 Sam. ii. 25, xix. 17, xxi. 5), but his mind was too confused with drink to decide aright.

8. The **tables** are those of sacrificial feasts. The excesses that took place, especially at the Feast of Tabernacles or Ingathering, when the vintage was ended, were no uncommon feature (1 Sam. i. 13 foll.; Amos ii. 8), and awakened Isaiah's wrath (xxii. 13). The last clause should be rendered 'so that there is no room.'

Verses 9, 10. Isaiah's scathing rebukes to the drinking priesthood arouse their anger, and they indignantly ask: **Whom will he teach,** &c. Instead of **message** Duhm would render 'oracle.' The reference seems to be to a *prophetic* deliverance.

9. them that are weaned . . . ? i.e. Are we mere children? Weaning took place at the age of one or two years in Hebrew families, see *Hebrew Antiquities* (Religious Tract Society), p. 23.

10. The original *tzaw latzaw tzaw latzaw, kaw lakaw kaw lakaw* is a mocking conformation of Isaiah's message to a nurse's child-prattle. We might attempt to reproduce it by 'Law on law, law on law; saw on saw, saw on saw[2]; a bittie here and a bittie

---

[1] Barth in his *Beiträge zur Erklärung des Jesaia*, 1885, p. 4 foll., has shown that the verb here rendered 'are swallowed up' should be rendered 'wander distraught.' There are, in fact, two distinct verbs with the same root-characters, one of which means 'to swallow up' and the other 'to stray,' 'be distracted.' Cf. Isa. ix. 16 [Heb. 15], where the parallelism clearly shows that we should render 'led astray' (not 'destroyed' or 'swallowed up' with R. V. and R. V. marg.). Similarly iii. 12, xix. 3; Ps. lv. 10, cvii. 27.

[2] 'Saw' instead of 'saying' for the sake of the rime. 'Bittie' is selected as representative of the diminutive form in the original. Olshausen, *Heb. Formenlehre,* § 180; Ewald, *Ausführl. Lehrbuch,* § 167 a; cf. Socin, *Arabic Grammar,* § 66. The reference is to petty

11 line upon line; here a little, there a little. Nay, but by
men of strange lips and with another tongue will he
12 speak to this people: to whom he said, This is the rest,
give ye rest to him that is weary; and this is the
13 refreshing: yet they would not hear. Therefore shall
the word of the LORD be unto them precept upon
precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon
line; here a little, there a little; that they may go, and
fall backward, and be broken, and snared, and taken.

there.' The literal rendering would be: 'Commandment on commandment, commandment on commandment, rule on rule, rule on rule.' But the words are purposely abbreviated and reduced to rime in the Hebrew. The priests attempt to convey the impression of stale and wearisome iteration in the prophet's message.

11. The prophet replies to the taunt: 'Yea, with stammering speech and a foreign tongue will He speak to this people,' i.e. with the stammering jargon of foreign speech—the counterpart of your own mocking caricature of a prophet's message. The foreigners are the Assyrians who will invade the kingdom. Through their foreign speech God will in the hour of chastisement mock the scorners.

12. Render: 'He who said unto them: "This is the resting-place."' The utterance was doubtless clearly understood at the time in this brief form in which it was uttered. But in its conciseness it seems to *us* very obscure. Probably **this** means Jerusalem. The prophet refers to God's purpose that Jerusalem should be preserved and be a resting-place to His faithful ones amid the storms of Assyrian invasion. Apparently this was the burden of Isaiah's message at this time (cf. viii. 6), accompanied by the Immanuel word of comfort which the inhabitants of Jerusalem rejected in the early years of the reign of Aḥaz.

The close of the verse should read: 'This is the place of refreshment; but they refused to hear.' This was Isaiah's bitter experience in the early years of his ministry reflected in his consecration-vision, vi. 9 foll.

13. The prophet hurls back on the priests their own words of

---

instructions; but the use of the word in Job. xxxvi. 2 in reference to *time*, like a similar collateral form (*mizʿar*) in Isa. x. 25, xxix. 17, has led Ewald, Hitzig, Duhm, and Marti to render: 'A little time here, a little time there.'—We see no mimicry of a drunkard's stammering here.

Wherefore hear the word of the LORD, ye scornful 14
men, that rule this people which is in Jerusalem: Be- 15
cause ye have said, We have made a covenant with
death, and with hell are we at agreement; when the
overflowing scourge shall pass through, it shall not come

---

mockery: Yes, you treat my message as 'Law on law, saw on saw.' That is all that it means to you. You prepare the way for your own doom, 'that they may go and stumble backwards' (with a change to the third person).

14. The prophet now turns to the political rulers.—For **scornful** read 'scoffing.' Whether this and the following verses belong to the same or to a later period is uncertain.

15. The expressions **covenant with death** and 'agreement with Hades' are obscure, and various explanations have been offered. On the whole it seems most probable that these are references to the arts of sorcery and necromancy which were largely practised at this time. To these we have already had several references in Isaiah's oracles (ii. 6, viii. 19; cf. xxix. 4). There is, however, no ground for associating these superstitions here with Egypt and an Egyptian alliance (as Marti suggests). In ii. 6 they are connected rather with the 'East,' i. e. Babylonia or perhaps North Arabia. In times of national peril a people is specially prone to the cult of necromancy and holding converse with the dead (1 Sam. xxviii. 5 foll.). Zion's rulers thought not of the 'instruction and the testimony' (see viii. 19 and note), nor of Immanuel and the resting-place Jerusalem (verse 12), but of mysterious necromantic rites and the voices of the dead that 'chirp and mutter'; and so they lulled their forebodings to rest with the assurance: 'When the scourging scourge passes by, it shall not come to us.' In this rendering we have adopted the slight but, as it seems, almost necessary emendation of Duhm, which saves us from such a monstrous mixture of metaphors as **overflowing scourge** (similarly in verse 18). The verb *shâṭaf*, 'overflow' or 'flood,' occurs appropriately at the close of verse 17, and has been introduced here by a careless copyist. See also its use in reference to the Assyrian invasion in verse 2; cf. also viii. 7, 8. On the other hand, our Hebrew text, with its mixture of metaphor, is sustained by the LXX version, which is evidently based on the same reading. We have here to deal with a very nice question of literary criticism, and the probabilities are evenly balanced. Could the mixture of metaphor be admitted in a passage where the prophet is yielding to the impetuous flow of his thought, and in the following clause interpolates his own epithets **lies** . . .

unto us; for we have made lies our refuge, and under
16 falsehood have we hid ourselves: therefore thus saith
the Lord GOD, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a
stone, a tried stone, a precious corner *stone* of sure
foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste.
17 And I will make judgement the line, and righteousness
the plummet: and the hail shall sweep away the refuge
of lies, and the waters shall overflow the hiding place.

falsehood[1] into the speech of his interlocutors, who obviously held firmly to their superstitions and never thought of them as delusions? If we have an oxymoron in one case why not in another?

16. Isaiah is not destructive only. Instead of the false security of mysterious rites and the 'covenant' with the world of the dead which he sweeps aside, he constructs a safe basis for a nation's hope. 'Behold I have founded (so render with LXX, Pesh., Targ., and recent commentaries) in Zion a stone, a stone well tested, a corner stone of precious, solid foundation.' This is an idiomatic rendering of the Hebrew text, which is a remarkable series of abstract substantives: 'a stone of testing, a corner stone of preciousness, of foundation well founded.'

Fear not, therefore, though the Assyrian enemy is advancing to our gates, 'He who believes [in this sure foundation] shall not take hasty flight.' This gives us an excellent sense; but the LXX evidently had another text: 'shall not be ashamed.' Cheyne in his Commentary (third edition), followed by Guthe and Duhm, would render 'will not give way,' based on yet another proposed reading.

17. We have here set forth the ethical principles of Zion's sure foundation: Right—Justice. The metaphor of a building is maintained. 'And I will make judgment the measuring line, and righteousness the plummet.' Isaiah uses one of the words, *Kaw*, employed by the mocking priests (verse 10). Cf. Zech. i. 16, where it is employed, as here, in a special and technical sense of a builder's measuring line (distinct from the meaning in verses 10, 13).

The shock of the dread reality of Assyrian invasion will sweep away the delusions of the ruling classes like a hail-storm. Duhm, Cheyne, and Marti would cancel the Hebrew for **lies** from the text as an unnecessary gloss. But the LXX had the word in their text, and its presence is thoroughly appropriate.

---

[1] Cf. Mic. ii. 11; Jer. v. 31

And your covenant with death shall be disannulled, and 18
your agreement with hell shall not stand; when the
overflowing scourge shall pass through, then ye shall be
trodden down by it. As often as it passeth through, it 19
shall take you; for morning by morning shall it pass
through, by day and by night: and it shall be nought
but terror to understand the message. For the bed is 20
shorter than that a man can stretch himself on it; and
the covering narrower than that he can wrap himself in
it. For the LORD shall rise up as in mount Perazim, he 21
shall be wroth as in the valley of Gibeon; that he may
do his work, his strange work, and bring to pass his act,

18. disannulled: more strictly 'blotted out.' We have here a recurrence to the ideas and figures of verse 15.

ye shall be trodden down by it is a free reproduction of the original, which is more closely rendered: 'Ye shall be unto it an object trodden upon.' The pronoun **it** refers of course to the scourge.

19. The scourge shall be no transitory thing: 'So often as it passes by, it will take you, and it shall be sheer terror to understand the tidings.'

20. The use of the homely metaphor suggests that the prophet is here quoting some popular proverb. The drift is fairly obvious. The prophet is still addressing his warning to the rulers, and says to them in effect, the terrible facts of life (viz. the 'scourge' of Assyrian invasion) show clearly that religious principles (sorcery and necromancy, 'the covenant with death') are too narrow and inadequate to meet the need. Not religious ceremony and magic divorced from moral action, but the broad principles of eternal right, are the great need of the nation and the true foundation of its prosperity.

21. As in David's Philistine wars (2 Sam. v. 20 foll.) Yahweh will now manifest His power. The rendering of the last clause in R.V. is not in accordance with Hebrew grammar, which would properly require the insertion of the article before the adjective. As the Hebrew text stands the adjective must be treated as predicative[1]. Translate, therefore: 'As at the Valley in Gibeon shall He be impassioned in doing His deed,—outlandish is His deed;—and in working his work,—strange is His work!'

In 2 Sam. v. 20 **mount Perazim** is called 'Ba'al Perāṣîm,' since

---

[1] See Gesenius-Kautzsch., *Hebrew Grammar*^{26}, § 126. 2 i.

22 his strange act. Now therefore be ye not scorners, lest your bands be made strong: for a consummation, and that determined, have I heard from the Lord, the LORD of hosts, upon the whole earth.

23 Give ye ear, and hear my voice; hearken, and hear
24 my speech. Doth the plowman plow continually to sow? doth he *continually* open and break the clods of

---

Baal was constantly worshipped on mountain heights (cf. Baal-zephôn, Baali-râs in the Hauran, mentioned in Shalmaneser II's Annals, Schrader, *COT.*, i. pp. 200, 202 footnote). Perhaps the word Baal originally stood here and was removed through the scruples of Jewish redactors, and the word for 'mountain' substituted, or, more probably, Isaiah himself in such a discourse would avoid the name of Baal; cf. Hos. ii. 16 foll. [Heb. 18 foll.]. Gibeon here and in 1 Chron. xiv. 16 is a variant on the Geba' of 2 Sam. v. 25.

22. In such critical times of national peril the rulers are exhorted not to 'behave themselves as mockers,' since the prophet has received his message of 'complete destruction and a decisive doom.'

Verses 23-29 seem to be placed here in order to mitigate the effect of the preceding words, and the heart-breaking message they convey. It is a parable of the country farmer labouring on the soil, and of the wisdom that directs him. We are reminded of the poetic idyll of chap. v. 1 foll. The purport of the parable is to show that, like the husbandman, Yahweh is not for ever ploughing or breaking up the soil. The ploughing is for a contemplated end—the sowing, and the processes are, moreover, varied according to the character of the grain or of the plant (verses 27, 28). So with God's own plans and processes. They are designed for great moral ends, and nicely proportioned to the characters of the human subjects. Life is wise and ordered discipline. The present or impending 'scourge' will not be for ever. It will pass and yield to the sowing and the reaping. These applications of the parable the prophet leaves to be inferred.

The lines here are shorter:—

'Hearken and hear my voice,
Attend and hear my speech[1].
Doth the plougher *always* plough for the sowing,
Open and harrow the soil?'

---

[1] This opening reminds us of Lamech's song, Gen. iv. 23, 24.

his ground? When he hath made plain the face thereof, 25
doth he not cast abroad the fitches, and scatter the
cummin, and put in the wheat in rows and the barley in
the appointed place and the spelt in the border thereof?
For his God doth instruct him aright, *and* doth teach 26
him. For the fitches are not threshed with a sharp 27
threshing instrument, neither is a cart wheel turned
about upon the cummin; but the fitches are beaten

The word 'always' (*lit.* 'all the day') in the original is attached to the interrogative, and is the emphatic word at the beginning of the sentence.

25. 'Doth he not, when he levels its surface,
Scatter black cummel, sprinkle cummin,
And set wheat and barley,
And spelt as its border?'

LXX show that dittography, or the doubling of a word through a copyist's carelessness, has added words to our Hebrew text which ought to be rejected and never existed in the Hebrew text employed by the Greek translators. The Hebrew student will at once recognize that the Hebrew word for 'row' (R. V. **in rows**), viz. *sōrah*, is really a repetition of the word for 'barley,' *s'ōrah*. A similar remark applies to the Hebrew word for **in the appointed place** (R. V.), which is an altogether strange form. The LXX version of this portion of Isaiah's oracles is far more xact and careful than in other places. Its testimony therefore nust be treated with deference.

26. We follow Marti in inserting the word *Yahweh* at the eginning of this verse. This word, owing to its abbreviation, as been accidentally dropped out:—

'Yahweh hath guided him as to the right course[1].
His God instructs him.'

im of course means the husbandman or farmer.

27. The prophet now indicates in brief how reasonable is the ariety of agricultural processes employed. 'Black cummel is ot threshed with threshing-sledges, nor the cart-wheel turned ound over cummin.' The staff or some heavier stick (a club) is sed in *beating*. Not *threshing* with a sledge is the process equired. A threshing-sledge therefore is not employed. God

---

[1] In Heb. *mishpāṭ*, usually 'judgment,' but here used in the sense f 'right course' or 'custom'; cf. 1 Sam. viii. 9, 11.

28 out with a staff, and the cummin with a rod. Bread
corn is ground; for he will not ever be threshing it:
and though the wheel of his cart and his horses scatter
29 it, he doth not grind it. [**I** ?] This also cometh forth from
the LORD of hosts, which is wonderful in counsel, and
excellent in wisdom.

---

varies His processes—the Divine Husbandman on this great world-farm.

28. The first line should be rendered as an interrogative. This seems to be the only way of getting a satisfactory sense. Translate :—

> 'Is bread-corn crushed?
> Nay, not for ever doth he thresh it.'

So nearly all recent commentators. If we follow the Hebrew text before us we should render :—

> 'And though he drive his cart-wheel and his horses [over it]
> He does not crush it.'

But this destroys the rhythm and proportionate length of the lines. By a slight textual change Duhm restores the due length of the lines and the rhythm. It is best, therefore, to follow him and translate :—

> 'And though he drive his cart-wheel [over it]
> He scatters it without crushing it.'

The last line refers to the custom of casting the stalks of corn into the air so that the moderate wind may carry away the straw and chaff, and the grain falls and is collected together. Ezekiel uses this custom as a metaphor, xvii. 21. See *Primer of Hebrew Antiquities* (Religious Tract Society), p. 92, and figure opposite p. 86.

29. The processes of husbandry are the outcome of Divine insight. They proceed from God, 'who has shown marvellous counsel and great wisdom.' Duhm regards the concluding verse as written by Isaiah. It possesses, however, something of the style of the wisdom literature, and the word for **wisdom** in the last clause is never found elsewhere in Isaiah's writings, but frequently occurs in the wisdom literature of post-exilian times, especially the Book of Job. It is, therefore, not improbable that we have here the conclusion to the poem added by a post-exilian gnomic poet; though, on the other hand, it is quite possible that Isaiah wrote it himself. It is impossible to dogmatize on so narrow a basis.

[I] Ho Ariel, Ariel, the city where David encamped! add 29
ye year to year; let the feasts come round: then will I 2

CHAPTER XXIX.

Dire Peril of Jerusalem. Siege by Sennacherib, 703–701 B. C. We have already stated that it is not improbable, though by no means certain, that verses 14 foll. in the preceding chapter belonged to a considerably later period than the verses that went before. The 'scourge' seems to be at hand to smite. It is possible that verses 14 foll. were written about 711 B. C., in the days when Sargon was attacking Philistia. In any case the present chapter shows that the crisis of Judah's fate has arrived; the enemy is at the gates or advancing towards them. This chapter seems to be placed here in immediate succession to chap. xxviii, since it portrays the impending fate of Zion, while xxviii. 1–4 deal with that of Samaria.

1–4. Jerusalem's dire peril. Her doom is near.

1. The word **Ariel** is a problematic word, and various interpretations have been advanced. A concise list will be found in *Enc. Bibl.* under article 'Ariel.' Formerly commentators supposed with Eusebius (viz. Gesenius, Ewald, and Kuenen) that this signified *God's lion* (cf. 2 Sam. xxiii. 20), 'Zion being regarded,' as Dillmann says, 'as strong as a lion through God, queen among all cities (Mic. v. 7), a lioness towards her oppressors, an unconquerable royal city of God. That is her dignity and position. So much deeper becomes the mystery that she should be so hard pressed.'

Another and more probable view is suggested by a comparison with the inscription on the Stone of Mēsha‘, line 12: 'And I brought back from thence (i. e. ‘Aṭarôth) the altar-hearth (*aral*)[1] of Dawdoh.' Here the name written D W D H is probably a name for Yahweh (see note on chap. v. 1). See Driver, article 'Mesha' in *Enc. Bibl.*, and Bennett, article 'Moab' in Hastings' *DB.* We recognize the same word *aral* or *arel* in Ezek. xliii. 15, where it has the same sense (see Kraetzschmar on the passage). Accordingly render with Duhm:—

'Ah! altar-hearth, altar-hearth, city where David encamped,
Add year unto year, let the feasts run their round.'

Accordingly the word should be read Aral or Arel, and not Ariel[2].

---

[1] The hearth where the fire burns is called in Arabic *irat*, from a root *arâ*, 'to burn,' 'be burnt'; the *l* in the Hebrew form *aral* is a derivative addition (cf. Carme*l*, where the final *l* is attached to *kerem*, vineyard).

[2] Cheyne, who is here followed by Marti, would read this form as

distress Ariel, and there shall be mourning and lamenta-
3 tion: and she shall be unto me as Ariel. And I will

What is the conception that underlies the passage? The prophet contrasts the immediately impending future of the city with the glorious and now distant past. It is now the close of the year's festive cycle (i. e. of the old Hebrew-Canaanite year which began in autumn, not of the post-exilian (Babylonian) ecclesiastical year which began in *Nisan* or spring). The Feast of Ingathering (Tabernacles) has reached its close, which brought vividly before the people the conception of the Temple and its altar-hearth of Divine worship. The thoughts of the prophet go back to the heroic days of David (as in xxviii. 21), when he encamped in the city stronghold which is soon to be invested and filled with panic and grief (verse 3 foll.). There seems, therefore, to be bitter irony in the prophet's words 'Add year to year,' &c. when the doom seemed so near at hand. The tone of feeling reminds us of another oracle composed probably somewhat later (xxii. 1 foll.). The note of confidence in Jerusalem the resting-place (xxviii. 11, 16 foll.) was not always strictly maintained.

2. mourning and lamentation does not express the assonance of the original, this love of assonances being characteristic of Isaiah. Cheyne's 'moaning and bemoaning' is therefore preferable as a rendering. Substitute 'moaning' for '**lamentation**' in R. V.

In all probability we should read the second person feminine instead of third person in the last clause (so Duhm): 'And thou shalt be unto me as an altar-hearth,' not reeking with the blood of oxen or sheep, but with the blood of slain human victims—a gruesome suggestion which the context readily supplies. The slight change proposed by Duhm has much intrinsic probability, and makes the entire passage more harmonious in form.

3. The LXX here read the Hebrew word *dûr* as *Dawid* (i. e.

---

*U*riel, an old name for Jerusalem corresponding to the *Urusalim* of the Tell el Amarna inscriptions (see article 'Ariel' in *Enc. Bibl.*). Upon this Duhm (in the second edition of his commentary) makes the pungent criticism: 'Who among Isaiah's readers would have been able even to read this archaeological riddle, to say nothing of guessing it?' But in the days of Isaiah this was not a matter of mere 'archaeology.' In the Taylor cylinder of Sennacherib, which was contemporary with Isaiah, Jerusalem is called *Ursalimu* (col. iii. 8. 20). On the other hand, the theory seems to us far-fetched, as there is not the slightest indication that among the *Hebrews* the city was ever known by such a name as *Uriel*.

The identification by Jeremias of Ariel with the Babylonian *Arâlû* in the Lower World may be safely rejected.

camp against thee round about, and will lay siege against thee with a fort, and I will raise siege works against thee. And thou shalt be brought down, and shalt speak 4 out of the ground, and thy speech shall be low out of the dust; and thy voice shall be as of one that hath a familiar spirit, out of the ground, and thy speech shall

David), another illustration of the easy confusion of the characters for *d* and *r*. This reading Lowth, Bredenkamp, Cheyne, and Marti have adopted. The reference to David in verse 1 (and in xxviii. 21) lends a certain plausibility to this view. It is, however, much more probable that *Dûr* is the correct reading, and means here a *surrounding rampart* or fortress, as in Assyrian[1]. The parallelism of the entire verse becomes thereby consistent:

> 'And I shall encamp against thee as a rampart,
> And beleaguer thee with outposts
> And erect against thee fortifications.'

4. An idiomatic rendering, bringing out the full force of the parallelism, would be:—

> 'And thou shalt be low in thy speech from the earth,
> And from the dust abased shall thy utterance come,
> And thy voice shall sound like a ghost from the earth,
> And from the dust shall thy utterance chirp.'

This vivid passage portrays the deep dejection of the city caused by the siege, conveyed under the metaphor of a necromancer who speaks from some recess in the earth with low tones. The necromancer was supposed to be possessed by (or, as the Hebrew name expresses it, to be the *possessor of*) a spirit or 'ghost' (Heb. *ôb*), which spoke through him with a hollow utterance: cf. viii. 19. foll. and notes.

Verses 5-8. It hardly seems possible to regard these verses as forming an immediate sequence to the preceding, in which the desperate plight of Jerusalem is portrayed. In all probability we have here a fragment of another discourse on the same theme, Ariel (Aral), in which the note of confidence in Jerusalem's

---

[1] Employed in the proper names Dûr-Athara, Dûr-Sharrukîn, &c. See Delitzsch, *Assyr. Handwörterbuch* sub voce *dûru*. If we follow the hint of the LXX adopted by Lowth, Cheyne, and others, we are forced to give an unnatural signification to verse 1, and interpret it as meaning not 'city *in* which David encamped and which he fortified,' but 'city *against* which David encamped,' apparently in allusion to 2 Sam. v. 6 foll. (1 Chron. xi. 4 foll.). But such an historic allusion would hardly be appropriate here.

5 whisper out of the dust. But the multitude of thy foes shall be like small dust, and the multitude of the terrible ones as chaff that passeth away: yea, it shall be at an
6 instant suddenly. She shall be visited of the LORD of hosts with thunder, and with earthquake, and great noise, with whirlwind and tempest, and the flame of a
7 devouring fire. And the multitude of all the nations

inviolability is expressed as in xxviii. 11, 16 foll. Even Isaiah had his alternating moods of dismay and hope. Here, as in the closing verses of chap. xxviii (viz. verses 23–29), the editor of the collection contrives that the brighter passages shall relieve the darker.

5. Render 'the tyrants' instead of **the terrible ones. Thy foes** mean the foes of Jerusalem who are encamped against her.

6. This verse can be rightly understood only in the light of what precedes and follows[1]. Jerusalem's visitation from the Lord of Hosts is not a visitation of destruction, but of deliverance. The 'thunder, earthquake and loud noise; the tempest, hurricane, and flame of devouring fire' are to be directed against Zion's enemies. Cf. Ps. xviii. 6–18 (Heb. 7–19).

7. This is followed by the metaphor of a dream-vision. 'Like the baseless fabric of this vision' the uproar of foreign armies

---

[1] In all probability the last clause of verse 5 should be connected with verse 6: 'Then in a moment suddenly from Yahweh God of Hosts shalt thou be visited in thunder and earthquake, &c.' (So Cheyne and Duhm.) The passive (*Nif'al*) of the Hebrew verb for 'visit' is used in Prov. xix. 23, Num. xvi. 29, of visitation by calamity, but this furnishes no argument as to Isaianic usage. The active (*ḳal*) form is usually employed of calamitous visitation. But in its primitive sense of 'take oversight of' the verb is employed in a favourable sense in Exod. iii. 16; Jer. xxiii. 2. Also the fem. abstract in Heb. (rendered 'visitation') may be used in a favourable sense (Job x. 12) as well as in an unfavourable, punitive one. The latter is more usual.

There is, therefore, no sufficient reason to separate verse 6 from verse 5 as Cheyne and Duhm propose. The former regards verses 5, 7, and 8 as non-Isaianic interpolations which are prophecies of deliverances. Verse 6, in which 'shall be visited' is interpreted in an unfavourable sense ('will receive punishment'), is considered to form a natural sequence to the Isaianic passage verses 1–4. This view is intelligible, though in our opinion it breaks up verses 5–8 unnecessarily. Duhm divides verses 5–8 into three distinct fragments, a solution of the problem which is needlessly complex.

that fight against Ariel, even all that fight against her and her strong hold, and that distress her, shall be as a dream, a vision of the night. And it shall be as when 8
an hungry man dreameth, and, behold, he eateth; but he awaketh, and his soul is empty: or as when a thirsty man dreameth, and, behold, he drinketh; but he awaketh, and, behold, he is faint, and his soul hath appetite: so shall the multitude of all the nations be, that fight against mount Zion.

Tarry ye and wonder; take your pleasure and be 9

---

encircling Jerusalem will disappear. The word for **multitude** is a poetic term to which Isaiah is prone (cf. xvii. 12), and properly means 'tumult' or 'roar.' Cheyne translates 'horde.' We might render 'tumultuous throng of all the foreign peoples that march to war against the Altar-hearth.' The text that immediately follows this is far from certain. Probably the rendering of the reconstructed text should be 'and against her rampart and those that distress her.'

8. The metaphor of the illusive phantoms of dreams is here continued. For **hath appetite** substitute the stronger rendering 'craves (for drink).'

Verses 9-14 contain a severe rebuke from the prophet against the dull spirit of unintelligent amazement with which his deliverances are greeted by the people. A further course of strange Divine discipline awaits them (verse 14). Does this brief discourse follow immediately upon the preceding 1-4 (or 5-8)? Duhm denies this on internal grounds. There is no riddle in verses 1-4, 6, 7 (which Duhm recognizes as Isaianic). Most critics, however, do not share this view, but consider that verse 9 describes 'the stupid amazement which the so-called "riddle" of Ariel has produced in the prophet's audience' (Cheyne, *Introduction to Isaiah*). We see no improbability in this if we assume that the date of verses 1-8 can be placed in 703 B.C., two years or more before Sennacherib's invasion, when the rulers of Judah felt no apprehensions of coming disaster, and could discern no sufficient grounds for this feeling. Cheyne adopts this date (ibid. p. 190).

9. 'Linger and be dumbfounded' would be the most correct rendering of our Hebrew text. But there is some doubt as to the actual form of the first word, and recent scholars would therefore prefer to render with R.V. (marg.) 'be ye amazed.' The following clause should be translated 'be dazzled and blind,'

blind: they are drunken, but not with wine; they
10 stagger, but not with strong drink. For the LORD hath
poured out upon you the spirit of deep sleep, and hath
closed your eyes, the prophets; and your heads, the seers,
11 hath he covered. [I?] And all vision is become unto
you as the words of a book that is sealed, which men
deliver to one that is learned, saying, Read this, I pray
12 thee: and he saith, I cannot, for it is sealed: and the
book is delivered to him that is not learned, saying
Read this, I pray thee: and he saith, I am not learned.
13 [I] And the Lord said, Forasmuch as this people draw

---

or we might render as in R. V. (marg.) 'blind yourselves and be blind.' This unintelligent, unreceptive attitude of the countrymen of Isaiah was no new fact. It confronted him at the opening of his ministry, chap. vi. 9, 10: cf. xxviii. 9–13.

In the concluding part of the verse the LXX evidently regarded the verbs as imperatives, 'be drunken . . . stagger.' This lends greater symmetry to the verse.

10. The words **prophets** and **seers** were evidently explanatory glosses introduced into the text to interpret the words **eyes** and **heads.** They must have been inserted into the Hebrew text and become current in comparatively early times, since we find them in the LXX. We have, however, already had several examples of such glosses—viz. vi. 13 (ad fin.), vii. 8 (ad fin.), 17 (ad fin.), &c.

Verses 11, 12. We suddenly pass from poetry to prose. Some of the phraseology is strange to Isaiah, notably the word rendered 'vision.' Accordingly Cheyne is quite justified in saying that the passage, 'if Isaianic in origin, has at any rate been recast.' (*Introduction to Isaiah*, p. 190). Probably the original document was defective at this point, and the verses may have been rewritten by a scribe in simple prose instead of prophecy.

11. all vision is a wrong rendering. Render 'vision (or revelation) of the whole,' i. e. all future events. Also the word **book** is misleading. Substitute 'document' or 'writing.' By **learned** is meant 'one who understands writing,' which is a more literal rendering. Cheyne appropriately translates by 'a man who is a scholar.' The simile is used to describe the general incapacity of the ruling classes to understand God's revelations through His prophet. They might be called illiterates in spiritual life, who had not mastered even its very alphabet.

Verses 13, 14 are obviously Isaianic both in form and substance,

nigh *unto me*, and with their mouth and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear of me is a commandment of men which hath been taught *them*: therefore, behold, I will 14
proceed to do a marvellous work among this people, even a marvellous work and a wonder: and the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid.

Woe unto them that seek deep to hide their counsel 15

---

and are closely connected with the preceding verses. They are a rebuke to hollow, insincere formalism.

13. The clauses are wrongly divided in R. V. Render:—

'Because this people draw nigh with their mouth,
And with their lips do me honour, though their heart withdraws far from me,
And their fear of me has become mere precept of men learned by rote.'

Isaiah here strikes a note already familiar to us in i. 10 foll., and heard in earlier days from the prophet Amos, v. 21 foll. (cf. Mic. vi. 6–8; Ps. l. 8 foll.). 'Fear of Yahweh' is the ordinary Hebrew way of expressing the word 'religion.' This in Isaiah's days had become mere conventional tradition and ceremonialism.

14. The translation should be: 'Therefore, behold, I will yet further[1] do wondrous things to this people, wonders wondrously' (so Ewald). In the light of their Divine dealings the wisdom of Judah's rulers shall pale and perish.

Verses 15–21. The prophet now proceeds to deal with this poor human wisdom of the Jewish politicians, which is destined to come to nought. These work in secret as though they can act apart from God. As well might the clay ignore the potter. This underlying conception of human self-sufficiency inverting man's true relation to God has already met us in other connexions and with other applications. Cf. especially Isa. x. 7–15. In a short time a great change shall be wrought. The deaf shall hear, the blind see, the poor shall rejoice in Yahweh, and tyranny shall disappear (verses 17–21).

To what political schemes does Isaiah refer of which God does not approve and which are being carried out in secret? We are here touching the moving spring, the main underlying motive, not

---

[1] The Hebrew verb represented by this adverb should be read as a *ḳal* particle. Cf. the same use of *ḳal* in Gen. xxxviii. 26; 1 Sam. vii. 13, xv. 35, &c.

from the Lord, and their works are in the dark, and
16 they say, Who seeth us? and who knoweth us? Ye
turn things upside down! Shall the potter be counted as
clay; that the thing made should say of him that made
it, He made me not; or the thing framed say of him

---

hitherto definitely expressed, which has been operating in the mind of Isaiah through most of the oracles in this group of discourses in chaps. xxviii–xxxii, viz. his stern opposition to an alliance with Egypt, which was actively promoted by a strong party in Jerusalem since the death of Aḥaz (715 B. C.), and especially since the recovery of Egypt's power (708 B. C.). It was the weakness and procrastination of Egypt that was the ruin of Ephraim in 722, to which xxviii. 1–4 refers. It is not till we come to the following Isaianic section, xxx. 1–5, also beginning with the exclamatory particle Ah! (Woe!), and also to the further section with a similar beginning, xxxi. 1–9, that express mention is made of Egypt and of the policy of those who 'take refuge in its shadow' (xxx. 3). See Introduction, p. 31 ff. There can, therefore, be no doubt that the counsel which the rulers, denounced in verses 15 foll., are 'hiding deep from Yahweh' (verse 15) is the alliance with Egypt which was then secretly yet actively promoted.

16. The rendering of R. V. (marg.), 'O your perversity!' ought to be substituted for the A. V. and R. V. Both Duhm and Marti regard this and the following verses as a later addition. The arbitrary dictum of these critics, that the metaphor of the potter and the clay, the creator and the creature, does not belong to the ancient world in which Isaiah lived, which rather conceived of God's relation to man as that of a King to His people, need not detain us. The very word used in the early pre-exilian creation account (J.) for Yahweh's creation (properly 'fashioning' or 'moulding') of man from the soil of the earth (Gen. ii. 7), would be immediately suggestive of the metaphor which Jeremiah employed with such potent effect (xviii. 1–10). That pottery existed in Canaan several centuries before the days of Isaiah needs no demonstration: cf. xxx. 14. The main facts may be gleaned from the writer's *Hebrew Antiquities*, pp. 114–8, and the article 'Pottery' by Bliss in Hastings' *DB*. There is, therefore, no need to go so late as the Deutero-Isaiah (xlv. 9) to find the source of such ideas in the O. T. To talk of this passage as a 'theological discussion' (Marti) is an abuse of terms. Accordingly we may reasonably assume that this and the following verses (16–21) were uttered by Isaiah, though perhaps touched (as in verse 19) with an occasional phrase by a later editor. See Cheyne, *Introduction*, p. 194.

that framed it, He hath no understanding? Is it not 17
yet a very little while, and Lebanon shall be turned into
a fruitful field, and the fruitful field shall be counted
for a forest? And in that day shall the deaf hear the 18
words of the book, and the eyes of the blind shall see
out of obscurity and out of darkness. The meek also 19
shall increase their joy in the LORD, and the poor
among men shall rejoice in the Holy One of Israel.
For the terrible one is brought to nought, and the 20
scorner ceaseth, and all they that watch for iniquity are
cut off: that make a man an offender in a cause, and 21
lay a snare for him that reproveth in the gate, and turn
aside the just with a thing of nought. [**Ex.**] Therefore 22

---

17. The transformations in the world of human moral life are *accompanied*, and not merely *symbolized*, by transformations in the physical world. See note on v. 9, 10 (ad fin.), where illustrations of this conception of the sympathy between the moral world and the natural are furnished. The last clause recurs in xxxii. 15 (which Duhm acknowledges to be Isaianic). In both passages the **forest** is a term expressive of rich luxuriance intended to enhance the conception of fertility expressed by the **fruitful field** or 'fruit-plantation'. So Kimhi, Delitzsch, Orelli, and Guthe. Cf. x. 18. We have, therefore, in this verse an ascending climax: Lebanon, fruit-plantation, forest; similarly in xxxii. 15.

18. We are carried back to verses 11, 12 (Isaiah reduced to prose). There it was the illiterate who could not read. Here it is the deaf who cannot hear. In the former case no remedy for the human incapacity is suggested. Here Divine power works a great change. The deaf hear and the blind see: cf. xxxii. 3. For **book** (as in verse 11) read 'document' or 'writing.'

19. The meek, i. e. the suffering ones. The language is that of later literature, viz. of the Psalms.

20. For **terrible one** substitute 'tyrant.'

21. Translate:—

'Who bring men under condemnation by a word (i. e. false witness),
And lay snares for him who in the gate vindicates the right.'

with a thing of nought, i. e. by an empty plea: cf. Amos ii. 7; Isa. x. 2.

Verses 22-24. Various indications point to the conclusion that

thus saith the Lord, who redeemed Abraham, concerning the house of Jacob: Jacob shall not now be ashamed,
23 neither shall his face now wax pale. But when he seeth his children, the work of mine hands, in the midst of him, they shall sanctify my name; yea, they shall sanctify the Holy One of Jacob, and shall stand
24 in awe of the God of Israel. They also that err in spirit shall come to understanding, and they that murmur shall learn doctrine.

30 [I] Woe to the rebellious children, saith the Lord,

---

we are here dealing with a passage which has been attached to Isaiah's discourse by a later writer. Not till the days of Ezekiel and the Exile does prophecy become retrospective, and delight to dwell on the patriarchs by name, a practice which grew in Jewish literature. Here we have an evident reference to a tradition respecting Abraham's life not recorded in the O. T. It is difficult, however, to see any connexion between the 'redemption' of this passage and the elaborate story in the Book of Jubilees, chap. xii, which recounts Abraham's conversation with Terah and the destruction of his father's idols and departure from Ur of the Chaldees. 'Redemption' in the O. T. is usually interpreted to mean some express act of Divine interposition or deliverance as at the Red Sea. Some such interposition in the life of Abraham in Babylonia, or subsequent to his entrance into Canaan, was part of the tradition which prevailed in post-exilian Judaism, and has perished[1].

23. Some recent commentators would delete the words **his children** as a gloss. It stood in the text employed by the LXX, and must have been introduced at an early date.

Chapter XXX.

Events have ripened since Isaiah's last discourse was delivered. Hitherto his references to the policy of an Egyptian alliance had been veiled and couched in general terms. Now there is no conthat take counsel, but not of me, and that cover with a covering, but not of my spirit, that they may add sin to

---

[1] Unless we adopt the view that there is here a reference to the late tradition of the casting of Abraham into Nimrod's fiery furnace because he refused to worship Nimrod's idol (Targ. of Jonathan on Gen. xi. 28), and his deliverance by a Divine miracle, which is obviously based on the similar narrative in Daniel (chap. iii). But such a supposition is extremely improbable.

cealment. Probably the policy of his opponents had meanwhile become open and avowed. Previously we know that it was cherished and promoted in secret (xxix. 15). The Egyptian party in Ḥezeḳiah's court had now succeeded in getting emissaries dispatched with rich presents to the banks of the Nile. The prophet declares that this policy will only bring disgrace (verses 1–7). At this crisis the prophet is told to record in a book, as a permanent testimony for future use, Yahweh's denunciations of His people as rebellious sons, who wish only smooth things to be addressed to them. Calamitous results will follow (8–17). In the crisis of the nation's distress, however, Yahweh will have mercy. A better spirit will come over the people. Idols will be cast aside. Prosperity shall return and the ruins of the past will be restored (18–26). Lastly, Yahweh will personally interpose in a decisive struggle with Assyria. With songs of rejoicing, as on the night inaugurating a festival, will His people greet the awful thunder of His destructive wrath against Judah's foes, and Assyria will shrink in terror before His chastening rod (27–33).

Verses 1–7. Denunciation of Yahweh's rebellious sons and the Egyptian alliance.

1. that take counsel is not an accurate translation. Render: 'in that they carry out a purpose, yet not from me.' This clause shows in what the rebellion consists. This policy does not proceed from Yahweh, and has no sanction from Him. There has been considerable variety of opinion from early times as to the meaning of the next clause: see R.V. (marg.). The view adopted by most scholars—Gesenius, Hitzig, Guthe, Duhm, and Marti—follows the interpretations of the early versions, LXX and Peshiṭto. These render: 'and in that they pour out drink offerings,' i. e. conclude a formal treaty (in allusion to the libations which were customary in these cases: cf. Greek *σπονδαί*). Another interpretation follows the rendering given in Aq. and Vulg., viz. 'in that they weave a web' (so Ewald and Delitzsch). The former rendering is perhaps preferable, but in either case we have to assume an unusual signification for a word; moreover, it is extremely doubtful whether the drink-offering was the ordinary and recognized ceremony in the ratification of covenants among Semitic nations. The covenant, as we know, was solemnly ratified by an *animal* offering: cf. Gen. xv[1]. It is, therefore, probable

---

[1] On covenant sacrifice see Paterson in Hastings' *DB.*, article 'Sacrifice,' vol. iv. p. 335 (top of left-hand col.). It must be remembered that, in all such covenant sacrifices with a foreign power, the

2 sin: that walk to go down into Egypt, and have not
asked at my mouth; to strengthen themselves in the
strength of Pharaoh, and to trust in the shadow of
3 Egypt! Therefore shall the strength of Pharaoh be
your shame, and the trust in the shadow of Egypt your
4 confusion. For his princes are at Zoan, and his
5 ambassadors are come to Hanes. They shall all be
ashamed of a people that cannot profit them, that are
not an help nor profit, but a shame, and also a reproach.

---

that we are to think of the blood of the victim poured on the stone symbol. With reference to *wine* offerings, cf. Hos. ix. 4.

Such a treaty of alliance, we are told, is not concluded 'with my spirit,' i.e. without Divine sanction, announced to them through God's inspired prophets.

The 'heaping of sin upon sin' may have reference to previous acts of similar disloyalty to Yahweh, such as the alliance of Ahaz with Assyria (Tiglath-Pileser III), in the hour of Judah's danger (chap. vii), and similar endeavours to lean upon an Egyptian alliance in the days of Sargon, 711 B.C. (chap. xx). It is to be noted that Isaiah regarded foreign alliances in precisely the same light as the prophet of the northern kingdom, Hosea (vii. 11, x. 6). Or there may be an allusion to sins differing in kind, and Isaiah is thinking of the practices of necromancy (xxviii. 15 and note), to which these further sins of disloyalty to God through foreign alliances were added.

2. These emissaries are already on the way to Egypt 'to find refuge in the refuge of Pharaoh, to seek shelter in the shadow of Egypt' (so we should render).

3. But this will only end in shame and reproach.

4, 5. These next two verses are obscure, and the only rendering which affords a satisfactory sense is the following:—

'For even though his (i.e. Pharaoh's) princes were in Zoan and his envoys reach to Hanes, all would suffer disappointment in reference to a people that brings them no profit, and furnishes no

---

recognition of the presence and power of the deity of that foreign nation, as well as that of Israel, was involved. And where the treaty implied subordination or vassalage, the national relation of subjection would similarly affect the relation and prestige of the nation's god. For in the nation and the nation's acts the nation's god was in a very real sense incorporate.

[**R**] The burden of the beasts of the South. 6
[I] Through the land of trouble and anguish, from whence come the lioness and the lion, the viper and fiery flying serpent, they carry their riches upon the shoulders of young asses, and their treasures upon the bunches of camels, to a people that shall not profit

---

assistance and brings no profit, but becomes a shame and also reproach.'

Here we understand that the Egyptian monarch (i.e. Shabako[1], and not Tirhaḳah) has sent his princes and other envoys to meet the deputation dispatched from the court at Jerusalem. Ḥanes is the Greek Ἄνυσις, and in later times *Heracleopolis magna*, and at the present time is to be identified with Aḥnās-el-Medine, which lies considerably south of the Delta and Memphis, between the Nile and Fayum. Even though the Judaean embassy be received by the Egyptian king so courteously, it is altogether futile. Isaiah evidently regarded the Egyptian power in the light of his past bitter experience of 722 and 711 (siege of Samaria and of Ashdod); and this estimate in no way differed from that of Rabshaḳeh (2 Kings xviii. 21; Isa. xxxvi. 6—'this broken reed, Egypt').

Verses 6–18. We now come to a section with the editorial heading 'Utterance' (or 'Oracle,' R. V. marg.). It is difficult to agree with Kuenen and Dillmann-Kittel that we have here a mere continuation of verses 1–5. The fact that we have an editorial heading to this section is a clear indication that we have here a separate oracle of the prophet. It deals, however, with the same subject, and was delivered about the same time (so Cheyne and Duhm).

6. The origination of the title 'Utterance respecting the beasts of the south country' (*nègebh*)[2] is perfectly intelligible. As in

---

[1] See *Enc. Bibl.* article 'Egypt' (by Max-Müller). It may here be remarked that the mention of Zoan and Ḥanes (Zoan is certified by LXX) is fatal to Winckler's theory that throughout Isaiah we have a confusion between Egypt (*Miṣraim*) and the North Arabian *mât muṣri*. See Introduction, p. 17 foll., footnote.

[2] Max-Müller, *Asien u. Europa*, p. 148, finds the same word for the country between Judah and the Bedāwî of the south in the ancient Egyptian *Ngb.* Marti is disposed to find in the Hebrew word for 'beasts' the name for the hippopotamus (Job xl. 15), representative of the inertness of Egypt. But this is, like Duhm's surmises, only ingenious guesswork.

7 *them.* For Egypt helpeth in vain, and to no purpose: therefore have I called her Rahab that sitteth still.
8 Now go, write it before them on a tablet, and inscribe it in a book, that it may be for the time to come for

other cases the opening of the oracle suggests the phraseology of the title (cf. note on xxi. 1). There is, therefore, no need to emend the text as Duhm proposes.

Verses 6, 7. The beginning of this fresh oracle is apparently lost. The envoys had to traverse the intermediate desert of the 'south country,' which the prophet calls 'a land of trouble and anguish,' before reaching the Egyptian frontier. The desert was associated in the minds of the ancient Semites with demons or jinn (see article 'Demon' in Hastings' *DB.*, p. 590 (right-hand col.)); cf. xiii. (21 note); and on the flying or winged Saraf, xiv. 29 (note), and vi. 2 (note). We have here the names of mythical creatures, demon-personalities, like Azazel, which possessed a reality to the Hebrew mind. Among these must be included *Rahab*, which closely corresponds to the dragon of the Chaos-depth in Babylonian mythology—Tiâmat slain by Marduk god of light; see 'Cosmogony' in Hastings' *DB.*, pp. 503-5. The name occurs in Job xxvi. 12; Isa. li. 9; Ps. lxxxvii. 4, lxxxix. 11. According to the Hebrew conception, Yahweh performs the office of destroying this monster just as Marduk god of light in the Babylonian legend destroys Tiâmat. Isaiah seems to have been the first to apply this name *Rahab* (meaning, apparently, 'violent' or 'terrible one') to Egypt. In this he is followed by Ezekiel[1], who uses a similar term, 'great sea-monster' (xxix. 3). The name suggests, therefore, the idea of violence or unrest. To heighten the effect of contrast he calls Egypt by the scornful title of *Rahab sit-still.* The word for 'sit-still' is a verbal noun or infinitive in the original. The monster sat still and procrastinated while his allies were perishing.

Verses 8 foll. The verses that follow announce that Isaiah is to make a written record of his warnings as a testimony for the future, since the people are rebellious. Their unbelief and disobedience will bring about the most serious calamities.

The **tablet** reminds us of viii. 1 (cf. also verse 16); Hab. ii. 2. Whether it is to include the verses which precede is uncertain,

---

[1] The later references are in Isa. li. 9; Ps. lxxxvii. 4, lxxxix. 10 [Heb. 11], where the name of the dragon-monster Rahab is evidently linked with Egypt. The name Rahab is the Babylonian word *rêbu.* In applying it to Egypt Isaiah may have been employing the current language of his time.

ever and ever. For it is a rebellious people, lying 9
children, children that will not hear the law of the
LORD: which say to the seers, See not; and to the 10
prophets, Prophesy not unto us right things, speak unto
us smooth things, prophesy deceits: get you out of the 11
way, turn aside out of the path, cause the Holy One of
Israel to cease from before us. Wherefore thus saith 12
the Holy One of Israel, Because ye despise this word,
and trust in oppression and perverseness, and stay thereon;
therefore this iniquity shall be to you as a breach 13

---

but probably the pronoun 'it' (the feminine pronoun suffix in the original) refers back to what has immediately preceded[1].

9. The 'sons that refuse to hear Yahweh's instruction' is a thoroughly Isaianic note. From the first Isaiah denounced Judah's sin as disobedience or rebellion (i. 2).

10. The true prophets have always been more or less unpopular, and have suffered from the charge of anti-patriotism or of pessimism. A large proportion of their audience is anxious, not for truth, but for smooth things attractively presented. This was true in the days of Isaiah's elder contemporaries Amos (ii. 12, vii. 12) and Hosea (ix. 7, 8), as well as his coeval contemporary Micah (ii. 6, 11, iii. 11), and of his great successor Jeremiah (vi. 14, xi. 21, xiv. 13 foll.).

11. 'Depart from the way, turn aside from the path,' i. e. the mode of teaching which you declare to be the 'word of the Lord' (Yahweh)—'Cause the Holy One of Israel to cease,' i. e. Let us hear no more about the 'Holy One of Israel.' This designation of Yahweh, and the application of the term 'holy' to God in an ethical sense, were characteristics of the prophet's teaching; see note on vi. 3. But this ethical conception of religion and worship was as unfamiliar in those days (though preached with emphasis and passion to Israel by Isaiah's elder contemporary Amos) as it was evidently unpopular: cf. chap. i and introductory remarks to that chapter.

12. For **perverseness** substitute 'perversion,' viz. of justice.

13, 14. We have now a succession of vivid metaphors em-

---

[1] It is useless to discuss all the various alternative possibilities. If we follow the precedent of viii. 1 the writing will be limited to the words 'Rahab-sit-still,' as Dillmann supposes. On the other hand, the parallel clause refers to a 'document' or 'writing' which might well include the main portion of verses 6 and 7 and also 9–11.

ready to fall, swelling out in a high wall, whose breaking
14 cometh suddenly at an instant. And he shall break it
as a potter's vessel is broken, breaking it in pieces
without sparing; so that there shall not be found among
the pieces thereof a sherd to take fire from the hearth,
15 or to take water withal out of the cistern. For thus
said the Lord God, the Holy One of Israel, In returning
and rest shall ye be saved; in quietness and in con-
16 fidence shall be your strength: and ye would not. But
ye said, No, for we will flee upon horses; therefore shall
ye flee: and, We will ride upon the swift; therefore
17 shall they that pursue you be swift. One thousand
shall flee at the rebuke of one; at the rebuke of five
shall ye flee: till ye be left as a beacon upon the top of
18 a mountain, and as an ensign on an hill. [**Ex.?**] And

---

inently characteristic of Isaiah: 'as a rent on the point of falling bulges in a steep wall . . .; like the breaking of a potter's jar smashed without remorse, so that in its smash not a sherd can be found to fetch fire from the blazing hearth or for drawing water from the tank.' So complete is the wreckage that not a piece remains that can be serviceable. Such will be the utter ruin brought upon Judah by refusing to listen to Yahweh's instructions conveyed through His prophet. The following verses show that that misfortune refers not only to righteous conduct in social relations, but also to foreign policy.

15. In returning, i. e. from the adventurous policy of alliance with Egypt and war against Assyria. Quiet confidence in Yahweh shall be your only security. The prophet recurs to the counsels of xxviii. 12, 16, which may have been delivered at an earlier period (reign of Sargon), or even nearly at the same time as the present discourse: cf. Ps. xlvi. 5, 7, 10 [Heb. 6, 8, 11].

16. The horse was regarded with disapprobation by the religious conscience of the nation reflected in the prophets because it was a foreign importation: see *Enc. Bibl.*, article 'Chariot,' col. 725 foll.

17. For **beacon** read with R.V. (marg.) 'mast' or 'signal-pole': cf. i. 8. We find the reverse of the conception of this verse in Lev. xxvi. 8, and the reflection of the same idea in Deut. xxxii. 30.

Verses 18-26. The transition is very sudden, from threatening to therefore will the LORD wait, that he may be gracious unto you, and therefore will he be exalted, that he may have mercy upon you: for the LORD is a God of judgement; blessed are all they that wait for him.

For the people shall dwell in Zion at Jerusalem: thou 19

---

promises of Divine mercy. Various attempts have been made to construe verse 18 as a continuation of the threatening in the previous verses, and thus vindicate the significance of the connecting phrase **And therefore.** But this involves forced interpretations, such as 'Yahweh will wait in reference to being gracious unto you (i. e. before He is gracious to you), . . . will remain on high (an unsympathetic spectator) in the bestowal of compassion.' These are impossible renderings, the latter clause especially. Accordingly ingenious emendation (change of the character *r* to *d* in the original) yields us the more tolerable 'will be silent in the bestowal of compassion on you.' But we are saved from all this gratuitous trouble if we recognize the obvious fact that a new section begins with verse 18. Render, therefore:—

'And so Yahweh waits expectantly to show you favour,
And so arises to show you compassion' . . .

Accordingly the R. V. is at fault in the division of its paragraphs. The new paragraph ought to begin at verse 18, in accordance with its own rendering. Verse 19 is an obvious continuation of the thought of the preceding verse. It should be rendered:—

'O people in Zion, that dwelleth in Jerusalem, thou shalt not weep.'

Does this new section, in which there breathes the spirit of Divine compassion on Zion's sorrow (verses 18–26), come from the lips of Isaiah? Some of the expressions remind us of the prophet, and the language of comfort and hope is not alien to the mind of Isaiah at the close of his prophetic life. See Introduction. We have already had occasion to defend the Isaianic authorship of xxix. 16–21 against recent critics, where the prophet employs the language of Divine promise. There are, however, in that brief passage many points which connect it with passages whose Isaianic origin cannot be legitimately contested. Here, however, there is much that is non-Isaianic both in expression and idea. Even Kittel's confidence is shaken, and his remarks may be quoted: 'In reality there are many serious objections [to its Isaianic authorship], the conception that Yahweh is Israel's teacher in the law belongs to a much later time (cf. xxix. 18). The reference to the "great slaughter" in verse 25 reminds us of late

shalt weep no more; he will surely be gracious unto
thee at the voice of thy cry; when he shall hear, he will
20 answer thee. And though the Lord give you the bread
of adversity and the water of affliction, yet shall not thy
teachers be hidden any more, but thine eyes shall see
21 thy teachers: and thine ears shall hear a word behind
thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it; when ye
turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left.
22 And ye shall defile the overlaying of thy graven images
of silver, and the plating of thy molten images of gold:
thou shalt cast them away as an unclean thing; thou
23 shalt say unto it, Get thee hence. And he shall give the
rain of thy seed, that thou shalt sow the ground withal;
and bread of the increase of the ground, and it shall be
fat and plenteous: in that day shall thy cattle feed in
24 large pastures. The oxen likewise and the young asses
that till the ground shall eat savoury provender, which

---

eschatology.' To this sound criticism add the linguistic data carefully compiled by Cheyne, *Introduction to Isaiah*, pp. 198–9.

20. Read 'teacher' instead of **teachers**, i. e. God. On 'bread of affliction,' &c., probably a current phrase, cf. 2 Kings xxii. 27. It was the low prison diet of the criminal. Even in this stage of disciplinary suffering God will manifest Himself. 'My teacher shall not be hid.' The Hebrew word for 'shall not be hid' is rare and only occurs here. Others interpret 'shall not be put aside,' but the parallel clause renders the former translation more probable, since it heightens the contrast.

22. Idolatry shall be abandoned. For **cast them away** read 'scatter them broadcast.' (So R. V. marg.) On 'unclean thing' see R. V. (marg.) and cf. Lev. xv. 33.

23. the rain of thy seed is the literal rendering, i. e. the rain required for thy seed, especially the 'early' rain, which begins in October, which is the sowing time (called *early* in reference to the old Canaanite-Hebrew, i. e. pre-exilian or civil year, which was essentially agricultural).

24. The writer delights in painting the glories of agricultural life in this golden age that is to come. Note the difference of standpoint between Isaiah's employment of agricultural processes to enforce the lesson of the variety of Yahweh's methods of wise yet

hath been winnowed with the shovel and with the fan.
And there shall be upon every lofty mountain, and upon 25
every high hill, rivers *and* streams of waters, in the day of
the great slaughter, when the towers fall. Moreover the 26
light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and
the light of the sun shall be sevenfold, as the light of
seven days, in the day that the LORD bindeth up the hurt
of his people, and healeth the stroke of their wound.

---

stern discipline (xxviii. 23–29) and the more hopeful if not optimistic tone of this writer.

For **savoury** read 'salted.' The **provender** here was, as its Hebrew name indicates, a *mixture* of barley, oats, vetches, and beans. Cf. Job vi. 5, and Moore on Judges xix. 21.

For **fan** read 'fork.' On the processes of winnowing see *Hebrew Antiquities*, pp. 92 foll., and cf. LXX on 1 Sam. xix. 22.

25. Mountains and hills are usually dry, but even there water-courses shall bring fertility as though we were on the cultivated plains of Babylonia. The words rendered **rivers** and **streams** actually mean water-channels or water-courses: cf. Ps. i. 3, cvii. 33, Isa. xxxv. 7, xli. 18, and the author's note in *COT.*, ii. p. 311 ff.

'The day of great slaughter 'mid the downfall of towers' reminds us of Ezekiel's prophecy of Yahweh's overthrow of Gog in Ezek. xxxviii. 18–23. We have here also an evident echo of the Isaianic passage ii. 12–15.

26. Poetical names are given to **moon** and **sun,** viz. 'the pale one' and 'the glowing one.' 'Seven days,' lit. *the* seven days, viz. of the week. The word for **hurt** is more accurately expressed by 'breach.' The meaning of the last clause is—'and heals the fracture caused by the blow dealt on them.'

In the preceding section we have had occasion to observe parallels with Ezekiel (verse 25) and with Deutero-Isaiah (verse 25), to which we may add the reference to idolatry in verse 22, which strongly re-echoes Isa. xl. 19, 20, xliv. 9–20. Though we have occasional Isaianic phrases, the balance of evidence inclines strongly towards a non-Isaianic origin, the date of which we might approximately place towards the close of the Exile.

Verses 27–33 clearly reveal all the strength and vividness as well as rhythm of the great Master. It consists of three strophes, each of eight lines, contained in two verses. It portrays a Divine theophany whereby Assyria is annihilated amid the festal rejoicings of Judah. This passage has evidently been placed here as it seemed to follow the sequence of thought indicated by **the great slaughter** in verse 25.

27 [I] Behold, the name of the LORD cometh from far, burning with his anger, and in thick rising smoke: his lips are full of indignation, and his tongue is as a devouring
28 fire: and his breath is as an overflowing stream, that reacheth even unto the neck, to sift the nations with the sieve of vanity: and a bridle that causeth to err *shall be* in
29 the jaws of the peoples. Ye shall have a song as in the night when a holy feast is kept; and gladness of heart, as when one goeth with a pipe to come into the mountain of

27. name is here synonymous with personal presence and power, just as the word *kābhôd*, rendered 'glory,' is equivalent to external manifestation of the personality of Yahweh.

from far, i. e. either from Sinai [1] or, more probably, from His *heavenly* abode. For the conception of Heaven, or the atmosphere, as Yahweh's residence was primitive and ancient, as many indications show, and not a later conception.

28. Translate: 'like an overflooding torrent parting (its waters) even up to the neck.' The metaphor of overflowing floods of water is a favourite Isaianic figure of speech, viii. 7, 8, x. 22, xxviii. 17. There is a rapid change to an agricultural simile, 'so as to sway nations in the sieve of annihilation.' We have the same metaphor of the *sieve* applied to Israel in Amos ix. 9, but here another word for sieve is employed by the prophet for purposes of alliteration. Yet another metaphor follows descriptive of God's breath or blast, 'and as a halter that leads astray on the jaws of peoples.'

29. The second strophe begins with a description of Israel's joy as Yahweh's judgment proceeds: 'Your song shall be as in the night when a festival is consecrated.' Which among the three annual festivals is meant? Robertson Smith, *O. T. in the Jewish Church* (second edition), p. 345, suggests the night service for the commemoration of the Exodus, i. e. Passover. But Wellhausen (cited by Cheyne), with much more probability, sees here a reference to the Feast of Ingathering (Tabernacles), which played a much larger part in pre-exilian Canaanite-Hebrew life. He compares another Isaianic passage, xxxii. 10. Cf. also xvi. 10; Jer. xxv. 30; Judges ix. 27. This passage is important as showing the place that music as well as song held in pre-exilian worship, so that we have good ground for the assumption that some

---

[1] Cf. Judges v. 4, 5; Deut. xxxiii. 2, where both Seir and Sinai are mentioned as places from which God 'goes forth.'

the LORD, to the Rock of Israel. And the LORD shall 30
cause his glorious voice to be heard, and shall shew the
lighting down of his arm, with the indignation of *his* anger,
and the flame of a devouring fire, with a blast, and tempest,
and hailstones. For through the voice of the LORD shall 31
the Assyrian be broken in pieces, which smote with a rod.
And every stroke of the appointed staff, which the LORD 32
shall lay upon him, shall be with tabrets and harps: and

---

at least of the Psalms (or portions of them) contained in our Psalter originated in pre-exilian times. See the writer's remarks in *Critical Review*, Jan. 1892, pp. 11-13.

30. Meanwhile the storm of Divine fury is directed against the Assyrians. The **glorious** (or majestic) **voice** means the thunder (cf. Ps. xxix, where 'voice' repeatedly occurs in this sense; also Exod. xix. 16, 19). The lightning (often called 'fire of Yahweh') is described as the verse proceeds: 'And will display the descent of His arm in fierce wrath and the flame of devouring fire, destruction, rain-storm and hail-stones.' Cf. Ps. xviii. 7-16 (Heb. 8-17).

31. According to the punctuation and the ordinary rules of grammar the rendering of R. V., **which smote with a rod** (Asshur being the subject), is fully justified (cf. x. 5). Others, as Kittel, would make Yahweh the subject. On the other hand, it seems more probable that we ought, by a slight alteration of the vowel-points, to make the verb passive, 'with a rod shall he be smitten.' The **rod** here is the mace or club studded with nails, a formidable weapon in war. See x. 5, footnote.

32. By a slight alteration in the Hebrew word rendered **appointed,** involving the familiar change of *d* to *r*, Duhm has restored to us the probable reading, and we should accordingly render: 'and every passing over[1] (= stroke) of the staff shall be his (i. e. Assyria's) *chastisement*.'

The rest of the verse may be rendered: 'with tambourines and lutes and battles of wave-offering doth He fight with them.' The prophet recurs to the conception of popular rejoicing and festival music as the battle proceeds, and he summons to his imagination

---

[1] This curious expression is probably best illustrated by the use of the corresponding verb in connexion with the 'scourge' in xxviii. 15, 19. It seems to be a characteristically Isaianic expression. We might compare the same use of the verb in Num. v. 14; Nah. iii. 19: cf. Job ix. 11, xiii. 13.

33 in battles of shaking will he fight with them. For a Topheth is prepared of old; yea, for the king it is made ready; he hath made it deep and large: the pile thereof is fire and much wood; the breath of the LORD, like a stream of brimstone, doth kindle it.

31 Woe to them that go down to Egypt for help, and stay

---

the gruesome picture of the brandished bloodstained weapons as wave-offerings. The ancient Semitic conception of war as sacred, i.e. under Divine sanction and initiative, renders this view of the passage by no means so improbable and far-fetched as we might otherwise suppose. See article 'War' in *Enc. Bibl.* iv. col. 5,263. Other commentators (including Delitzsch and Guthe) translate the word rendered above 'wave-offering' by 'brandishing'; 'battles of brandishing,' i.e. brandished weapons, is a somewhat weak and commonplace expression.

33. The view adopted in the preceding verse is confirmed in this. Translate :—

'For a Topheth (place of burning) hath erewhile been set in order,
Yea, even for the king hath it been set,
Deep and broad hath He set it;
By its circle are fire and logs many.

The breath of Yahweh, like a brimstone stream, burns within it. The Topheth, or place of burning, reminds us of the human sacrifices and rites of Moloch in the valley of Hinnom, south of Jerusalem (2 Kings xxiii. 10; Jer. vii. 31 foll., xix. 6, 13). The name of the god Moloch signifies 'king'—but in this passage we are evidently to think of the king of Assyria, and it is not necessary to suppose that this reference to a king has been introduced by a punning gloss-writer. It is to be found even in the badly-corrupted text used by the LXX. We are to think of a colossal human burnt sacrifice prepared beforehand for the Assyrians with fire and logs set by the altar-circle. Even Isaiah stood far away from the light which was to shine seven centuries later—the fulfilment or full realization of the ideals which he sought to express. The spirit which breathes through this strange and fiery oracle is the spirit of Semitic warfare which was then all-prevalent and vital, and even now is by no means dead.

CHAPTER XXXI.

The prophet recurs to the subject of the Egyptian Alliance, and the policy is again denounced in strong terms (1-3). Yahweh will

on horses; and trust in chariots, because they are many, and in horsemen, because they are very strong; but they look not unto the Holy One of Israel, neither seek the
LORD! Yet he also is wise, and will bring evil, and will 2
not call back his words: but will arise against the house of the evil-doers, and against the help of them that work
iniquity. Now the Egyptians are men, and not God; and 3
their horses flesh, and not spirit: and when the LORD shall stretch out his hand, both he that helpeth shall stumble, and he that is holpen shall fall, and they all
shall fail together. For thus saith the LORD unto me, 4
Like as when the lion growleth and the young lion over his prey, if a multitude of shepherds be called forth against him, he will not be dismayed at their voice, nor abase himself for the noise of them: so shall the LORD of hosts come down to fight upon mount Zion, and upon

---

Himself interpose to protect His people, and Assyria will be destroyed (4–9).

1. The oracle begins with the characteristic **Woe**! (Ah!). For **stay** substitute 'rely,' 'depend.' The word rendered **strong** may also signify 'numerous,' and so it probably means in this passage. Cf. Ps. xxxviii. 20; xl. 6, 13 in Hebrew text.

2. For **will bring . . . will not call back** translate by perfect tenses 'has brought . . . has not withdrawn . . .' A word withdrawn ('called back') ceases to have power. See notes on ix. 8, 12.

3. Egypt is human and frail, **flesh** (= human) as opposed to **spirit** (Divine). The 'helper' of course corresponds to Egypt, whose alliance against Assyria is being sought; the 'helped,' to Judah.

4. multitude in the original properly means 'the full number.' The rendering of the RV. *upon* **mount Zion** is obviously right. R.V. marg. **against** is wholly out of place. The figure is that of Yahweh leading forth His armies upon Mount Zion, His own holy hill, which He will defend like a lion against the assaults of the Assyrians. The conception of the closing verses of the preceding chapter (verses 27 foll.) is here sustained under the form of a new simile.

5 the hill thereof. As birds flying, so will the LORD of
hosts protect Jerusalem; he will protect and deliver *it*,
6 he will pass over and preserve *it*. Turn ye unto him from
7 whom ye have deeply revolted, O children of Israel. For
in that day they shall cast away every man his idols of
silver, and his idols of gold, which your own hands have
8 made unto you for a sin. Then shall the Assyrian fall
with the sword, not of man; and the sword, not of men,
shall devour him: and he shall flee from the sword, and
9 his young men shall become tributary. And his rock

5. Yet another metaphor to which Duhm quite needlessly takes exception. The flying birds are the parent birds solicitous about the safety of their imperilled offspring, which they swoop down to protect. The metaphor is somewhat similar to that of Deut. xxxii. 11 (in reference to the eagle). The last clause might be rendered: 'Guarding them He will deliver them, sparing them will carry them off safe.'

6-7. The pathetic image of the birds protecting their offspring may have suggested Christ's simile in His appeal to Jerusalem (Matt. xxiii. 37). They appear to have suggested to the prophet (or, as Duhm supposes, a later writer) the exhortation to repent and abandon idolatry. The Hebrew word for **turn ye** means properly '*re*turn ye.' The verb is used to express the idea of 'be converted.'

cast away: properly, 'reject' or 'despise.'

8. Translate: '. . . fall by the sword of one who is not-man;
And the sword of one who is not-mortal shall devour him.'
'Not-man,' 'not-mortal,' mean one who is superhuman, viz. Yahweh Himself. Some of the Assyrians in the great day of Divine visitation shall fall by the sword, but others shall take to flight—others shall become captives and be set to task-work, like the inhabitants of Rabbath-Ammon whom David appointed to the task-work of building (2 Sam. xii. 31 according to Hofmann's restored text adopted by Driver and Stade).

9. The verse is difficult, since it is not certain whether **rock** is subject[1] or object. Duhm, in his rendering: 'his rock he passes shall pass away by reason of terror, and his princes shall be dismayed at the ensign, saith the LORD, whose fire is in Zion, and his furnace in Jerusalem.

---

[1] Marti takes 'rock' as subject of the verb, but assigns to it a very artificial and unprecedented meaning, viz. the main body of the enemy's troops. 'His main body ["the rock" on which the king relies] will disperse in terror, and his officers (princes) will in con-

Behold, a king shall reign in righteousness, and princes 32

---

by through terror,' thinks that the reference is to a chased animal such as a mountain goat which is hunted, and in its terror passes by the rock where it usually takes shelter.

In the next clause, 'his princes fly away in dismay from the standard,' the meaning is that even the bravest men, his princes, do not rally round the standard as they might be expected to do, but are in panic-stricken flight.

The last clause, 'whose fire is in Zion and whose oven (furnace) in Jerusalem,' is evidently an allusion to the 'altar-hearth' of xxix. 1, i.e. in Yahweh's sanctuary in Zion, which was always considered by the Jews to be the Divine abode.

Verses 4 to 9 have been subjected to searching criticism by recent scholars. Duhm regards the latter part of verse 4, verses 5 and 6, the latter part of verse 8, and the first part of verse 9, as interpolations. Marti assigns verses 4-9 to later writers (Hackmann and Cheyne, 5-9).

CHAPTER XXXII.

This chapter may be divided into three sections—(1) verses 1-8, a Messianic passage containing a prophecy of the moral restoration of the Jewish community, which is to be governed by a righteous King and just rulers. (2) Verses 9-14, a denunciation directed against the frivolous women of Jerusalem. The city is to be completely destroyed, and also the surrounding country. (3) Verses 15-20 are a prophecy of the blessings of the future Messianic age, when God's Spirit will be poured out from on high, and the corresponding changes will be effected in the world of nature, and human society shall be established on a foundation of justice, and peace shall reign. The opinions of recent critics, from the time of Kuenen till the most recent commentator, Marti (1900), have with increasing unanimity pronounced against the Isaianic authorship

---

sternation abandon the standard.' This is a most improbable view. A more reasonable alternative is to regard 'his rock' as meaning the Assyrian deity who is 'to pass by in terror.' This is supported by Assyro-Babylonian proper names such as Bêl-shadûa: 'Bel is my mountain.' Cf. the references to Yahweh as a rock in chap. xxx. 29; Ps. xviii. 2, 31 (Heb. 3. 32); Deut. xxxii. 4 foll.; 1 Sam. xi. 2, &c.; and in the proper name Ṣuri-ēl: see Schrader, *COT.*, ii. p. 326.

2 shall rule in judgement. And a man shall be as an hiding

---

of any portion of this chapter. Cheyne, in his elaborate *Introduction*, discusses with considerable minuteness both the contents and phraseology, and, after carefully balancing Isaianic against non-Isaianic traits, pronounces decisively against an Isaianic origin in the case of all three sections of this chapter (pp. 173–180). Even Kittel, the cautious and conservative editor of Dillmann's Commentary, hesitates to ascribe verses 1–8 to Isaiah: 'We cannot build much on the mention of the King in verse 1. It can, of course, be regarded as a proof that it was written in pre-exilian times; but when we take into consideration the pale abstract form in which the King is here presented, we think of some later imitator of the prophet who has projected himself into the earlier time. More significant still is the absence of Isaiah's poetic fire. Moreover, we meet in this brief passage with a number of expressions which occur nowhere else in Isaiah, while there is much that reminds us rather of the "Wisdom" literature than of Isaiah. The utmost that we can assume is that some younger friends or pupils of the prophet have written this passage, or perhaps, we might say, generally chaps. xxxii and xxxiii (so Dillmann) . . . But it is more probable that a still later writer during the Exile or soon after attached this passage to the preceding chapter.' But this consensus of opinion is interrupted by the weighty judgment of Duhm, which differs widely, and in this case is cast almost unreservedly, on the side of conservatism. This is the more notable because his independence of all traditional opinions is well known, and all who have studied his great work on Isaiah are aware of his clear perception of the evidence of language, contents, and niceties of style, and of his trained sense of poetic metre and rhythm. With the exception of verses 6–8 and 19 the entire chapter is ascribed to Isaiah. (*a*) Respecting verses 1–5, after remarking that they contain two six-lined strophes precisely in the style of chaps. ii. 2–4 and xi. 1–8, he observes that, like the two latter passages, they deal with the time that follows the Judgment. All three passages he would assign to the close of Isaiah's lifetime. (*b*) Respecting the *denunciation of the women* in verses 9–14, he declares that it exhibits just as good Isaianic style as any passage in the entire book. On the other hand, it belongs to an *earlier* period of the prophet's life. This view is confirmed by the evidence arising from the absence of definite reference to any impending danger from Assyria. We are reminded of iii. 16—iv. 1. The thorns which are to cover the country, and the transformation of pleasure-gardens into a pasture for wild asses, are Isaianic traits of the earlier period: cf. chap. v. 6, 17. (*c*) In the *concluding Messianic passages* (verses 15–20) Duhm recognizes the same style and metre as in verses 1–5, and place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land. And the eyes of them that see 3

the kindred passages ii. 2-4, xi. 1-8. The views put forth by Stade and Guthe are partly due 'to mistaken critical theories respecting other passages . . . and also to theological ideas, for which the O. T. writers are not responsible, but only the critics themselves. To deny the Isaianic origin of a prophecy because it does not contain an exhortation to repentance is not criticism.' At the same time Duhm confesses to a certain measure of uncertainty, but holds that no convincing arguments have yet been advanced against Isaianic authorship. This view he still maintains (2nd ed., 1902).

This position we hold to be in the main sound. The reference to the Messianic King in verse 1 is a reference only, but is none the less significant. Why should a full and living portraiture have been added if Isaiah had already, and probably at this same closing period of his life, composed xi. 1-8[1]? It is acknowledged that the language is largely Isaianic. We are entering here on a very doubtful field of inquiry; and, with the very limited realm of assured Isaianic literature which we possess (upon which modern critics are constantly encroaching), we must allow for large margins of uncertainty. This is not the work in which to discuss the evidence which Cheyne has supplied in his valuable *Introduction.* The conclusion to which the present writer has arrived after a study of the evidence on both sides is that Duhm's contention is in the main correct, but that the composition of the great master has been touched here and there by later disciples. Dillmann's view was similar.

Verses 1-8. *A Messianic prophecy of righteous government*; four six-lined strophes.

1. in righteousness: i. e. according to righteousness as the form or standard to be aimed at.

2. the tempest here means a tempest of rain. Notice the characteristic succession of metaphors which we have already observed in Isaiah's oracles.

rivers of water should be 'water-courses,' a feature of Babylonian irrigation in the great plains of the Euphrates rather than of Judaean landscape (cf. Ps. i. 3). Perhaps we see here a touch by a later exilian student of Isaiah's oracles.

3. R. V. marg. renders more accurately 'closed' for **dim.**

---

[1] See the discussion respecting the Isaianic authorship of ii. 2-4, ix. 1-7, xi. 1-8, in the notes appended to those passages.

shall not be dim, and the ears of them that hear shall
4 hearken. The heart also of the rash shall understand
knowledge, and the tongue of the stammerers shall be
5 ready to speak plainly. The vile person shall be no more
called liberal, nor the churl said to be bountiful. [**Ex. ?**]
6 For the vile person will speak villany, and his heart will
work iniquity, to practise profaneness, and to utter error
against the LORD, to make empty the soul of the hungry,
7 and to cause the drink of the thirsty to fail. The instruments also of the churl are evil : he deviseth wicked
devices to destroy the meek with lying words, even when

---

4. R.V. marg. 'hasty' (or 'impulsive,' 'vehement') is perhaps better than **rash.** Probably stammering, like other physical defects, was regarded as a sign that a man was demon-possessed, and thus came to have a certain evil association. The stammerer accordingly came to be synonymous with 'evil person.'

5. 'The fool shall no longer be called noble,' as the R. V. marg. has it, is the more accurate rendering. 'Fool,' however, in the O. T. comes to have the depraved *ethical* rather than *intellectual* meaning which we moderns give the word. So in 1 Sam. xxv. 5; 2 Sam xiii. 12 ('folly') and Proverbs *passim.* Hence **vile person** is in reality no untrue rendering. For **churl**, however, we ought to substitute 'fraudulent' with Vulgate. With the thought of this passage cf. v. 20. The old condition of inverted moral relations shall pass away.

Probably this is all that Isaiah originally said or wrote, but to this some disciple has attached a little didactic moral poem of a somewhat commonplace order which serves to illustrate the vast difference between genius and mediocrity. This poem (verses 6–8) falls into two strophes of six short lines each, and is intended to illustrate the meaning of verse 5 :—

'For the fool uttereth folly,
And his heart doeth evil, (LXX reads for 'doeth' another
 word, 'deviseth')
Acting profanely
And uttering delusions in respect of Yahweh, . . .'

7. Render: 'The fraudulent man has evil instruments.' In the original the word for **instruments** is a punning conceit on the word 'fraudulent,' though it must be confessed that the original Hebrew word rendered 'fraudulent' is very doubtful. The

the needy speaketh right. But the liberal deviseth 8
liberal things; and in liberal things shall he continue.

[I] Rise up, ye women that are at ease, *and* hear 9
my voice; ye careless daughters, give ear unto my speech.
For days beyond a year shall ye be troubled, ye careless 10
women: for the vintage shall fail, the ingathering shall not
come. Tremble, ye women that are at ease; be troubled, 11

---

equivalent in an English rendering would be as Rodwell (quoted by Cheyne) suggests: 'The mean man has evil means.' The next two lines should run—

'He plans plots
To destroy the poor, &c.'

'But the noble man plans noble things,
And on noble things he takes his stand'—

i. e. perseveres in his course of noble or generous action. The word rendered 'noble' in Hebrew has an aristocratic colouring like its English equivalent: cf. Num. xxi. 18; 1 Sam. ii. 8; Job xii. 21, xxxiv. 18; Ps. xlvii. 10, &c.; Prov. viii. 16, xxv. 7.

Verses 9-14. *Denunciation of the frivolous ladies of Jerusalem.* These evidently belonged to the wealthy classes of society, as the references to the pleasure-gardens and palaces in verses 12 and 14 clearly indicate. We are reminded of the earlier period of Isaiah's utterances, viz. chap. iii (especially verses 16 foll. referring to women); chap. v. 11 foll., belonging to the days of Aḥaz; and the earlier denunciations of the nobles who 'dwell at ease' in Samaria and Zion by Amos (chap. vi). This poem consists of three strophes consisting of four long lines each, every line divided into two parts.

9. Rise up (or better 'arise'): i. e. from your condition of sloth and indifference. The expression **at ease** includes the notion of culpable and careless indifference. Compare the same use in Amos vi. 1, where we have also the identical parallelism in the original Hebrew ('at ease' . . . 'secure'). **Careless** is not so accurate a rendering as 'secure' or 'confident' (R. V. marg.). 'Ye daughters, happy in your confidence, hearken to my utterance.'

10. days beyond (*lit.* 'over') **a year:** i. e. 'in a little more than 1 year.'

For **be troubled** read the stronger and more accurate 'tremble'; and the reason follows, 'the vintage has perished.'

11-12. Render: 'be terrified . . **tremble.**' In the arrangement

ye careless ones: strip you, and make you bare, and gird
12 *sackcloth* upon your loins. They shall smite upon the
13 breasts for the pleasant fields, for the fruitful vine. Upon
the land of my people shall come up thorns and briers;
14 yea, upon all the houses of joy in the joyous city: for the
palace shall be forsaken; the populous city shall be
deserted; the hill and the watch-tower shall be for dens

---

of the lines the close of this verse and the beginning of the next should be combined together (as in Duhm's arrangement) in forming a single line.

'Gird [sackcloth] upon your loins—smiting on the breasts
For the fair fields—for the fruitful vine.'

Wellhausen, in his *Remains of Arabic Heathendom* (second edition, p. 177), gives us instructive illustrations of the ways of expressing grief among the early Hebrews recorded in the O. T. by quoting from the customs of the Arab. Even stripping the person bare, to which Isaiah makes reference, is no uncommon trait among Arab women as a sign of grief at the news of death. Wellhausen quotes from the *Kitâb al-aghâni*, xv. 139, the incident that after the death of Amir, son of al Tufail, in the land of Salul, a tall woman of that country stripped herself half naked and announced the news in short rhymes to her fellow tribesmen, after which there arose universal lamentation. Here the sorrowing of the women is for the charming lands, perhaps the gardens or estates attached to the summer-houses and winter-houses which the wealthy Israelites at that time possessed (Amos iii. 15; Isa. ix. 9, 10), ere long to be utterly destroyed. Cf. Jastrow, *ZATW.*, xxii. p. 117 ff.

14. the populous city: i. e. the city with its tumultuous crowds (according to the full force of the original). The LXX suggest grave doubts as to the text, and seem to indicate by their translation, what from the Heb. text itself appears probable, that the Heb. preposition rendered **for** should be eliminated before **dens** as a corruption due to dittography. Render: 'hill and watch-tower have become hollows for ever,' viz. hollows which are lairs for beasts. Duhm would cancel the following word, viz. 'hollows,' and not the preposition, which he would slightly alter, and so translate: 'hill and watch-tower have become a bare spot for ever.' But the LXX lend no countenance to this solution of the textual problem, since they sustain the text of the last three words of the original in their rendering: 'villages shall be *caves for ever*.' We must content ourselves with the provisional solution proposed above as the *most probable*. The general sense is fairly clear.

for ever, a joy of wild asses, a pasture of flocks; until the 15
spirit be poured upon us from on high, and the wilderness
become a fruitful field, and the fruitful field be counted
for a forest. Then judgement shall dwell in the wilderness, 16
and righteousness shall abide in the fruitful field. And 17
the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect
of righteousness quietness and confidence for ever. And 18
my people shall abide in a peaceable habitation, and in
sure dwellings, and in quiet resting places. But it shall 19
hail, in the downfall of the forest; and the city shall
be utterly laid low. Blessed are ye that sow beside 20
all waters, that send forth the feet of the ox and
the ass.

Verses 15–20 form a brief detached Messianic fragment appended to the preceding denunciation of the frivolous women. Both were composed by Isaiah; but while the latter utterance (verses 9–14) belongs probably to the early or to the middle period (reign of Sargon ?711 B. C.) of the prophet's ministry, the former (verses 15–20) evidently belongs to its close.

15. The latter part of this verse closely resembles xxix. 17, on which see note.

17. The result of righteous conduct will be a full, secure well-being (peace).

18. The reference to the 'abode of peace, the secure habitations, and the resting-places of easy freedom from care,' reminds us of xi. 6–9.

19. This verse seems to be out of place here, and it has been suggested that it does not belong to this Messianic fragment at all, but should be placed after verse 14. The expression **it shall hail** in the original has been much doubted on account of its strangeness. Accordingly, Secker, Lowth, and Duhm prefer a slight change which gives symmetry of construction to the whole verse, and translate: 'And the forest shall go down in downfall.' Forests, we know, were cut down by Assyrian invaders, and in the inscriptions of their monarchs we often read that valuable and fragrant trees were taken away to the royal parks: cf. x. 19 note.

20. Happy the man who lives in this golden Messianic age. There is no fear that any brook or stream will run dry (cf. Job vi. 15; Isa. lviii. 11), or that the seed sown by its banks will grow up only to wither and die. Ox and ass will have rich pasture to

33 [**Pre-Ex.**] Woe to thee that spoilest, and thou wast not

---

feed them, and a never-ceasing supply of water to quench their thirst.

Here it is probable that we have the last words of the prophet Isaiah: they form a worthy conclusion to his oracles.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

This chapter is evidently an addendum to chaps. xxviii-xxxii, and deals with the subject of the catastrophe wrought by the invasion of Sennacherib in 701 B.C. Kuenen (*Histor.-krit. Einleitung*, ii. p. 82) thinks that 'it leaves with us the impression that it exhibits a later phase in the development of Isaianic modes of thought.' That Isaianic phraseology is to be found in this chapter is unquestionable. It begins with the characteristic Isaianic Ah! ('woe'): cf. v. 8. foll., x. 5, which recurs in the collection xxviii-xxxii. A discriminating survey of the vocabulary, Isaianic and non-Isaianic, is to be found in Cheyne's *Introd.* pp. 166-168. Could it have been composed by Isaiah? In view of the language and contents this is not probable. The language does not possess the flow and impulsive force of the oracles of the prophet of the eighth century. The ideas, it is true, are not separated from those of that prophet by quite so sharp a contrast as Cheyne argues. The 'enthusiasm for religious services' contrasted with the aversion to ceremonial (of chap. i) is not so clearly visible to the present writer as it is to the above-mentioned critic. On the other hand, Cheyne is right in the contrast which he draws between the Messianic ideas of this passage and those which characterize Isaiah. Compare the vague reference to 'the King in his beauty,' which is purely ideal (verse 17), resembling Jer. xxiii. 5 foll.; Ezek. xxxiv. 23, 24; Isa. lv. 4, with the definite living concrete portraiture of ix. 1-7, xi. 1-9[1]. When we reach verse 22 the personality of Yahweh, Judge, Ruler, and King, overshadows all.

On the whole neither language nor contents indicate decisively a later period than the end of the last century of the Kingdom of Judah. On the other hand, the phraseology of verses 14-16 points rather to a post-exilian period. There is certainly want of clearness in the arrangement: 'individual verses stand almost isolated and without any connexion' (Marti). The apocalyptic character of the chapter is by no means as clearly marked as Duhm and Marti spoiled; and dealest treacherously, and they dealt not treacherously with thee! When thou hast ceased to spoil, thou shalt be spoiled; and when thou hast made an end to deal treacherously, they shall deal treacherously with thee. O LORD, be gracious unto us; we have waited for 2 thee: be thou their arm every morning, our salvation also

---

[1] Cheyne's argument, based on these passages, appears to us pointless when we bear in mind that he rejects their Isaianic origin and regards them as probably post-exilian (*Introd.*, pp. 44 foll., 57 foll.). This argument can only stand when their Isaianic genuineness is admitted.

suppose, and it would be impossible to establish any close relation between the ideas or language of this chapter and those of the Book of Daniel. We may, therefore, safely reject the extreme views of Duhm and Marti, who assign it to the Maccabaean period[1]. We are not disposed to refer its composition to the age of Josiah (with Kuenen), but somewhat later (the reign of Jehoiaḳim), when certain Isaianic fragments composed immediately before the invasion of Sennacherib became incorporated into verses 1–12 and other portions were added, the main substance of the chapter forming a message of comfort for the Jews during the troubled times which heralded the final overthrow of the southern kingdom. We might place this oracle near the close of the seventh century. But there are evident signs in verses 14–16 that additions were made by a post-exilian writer.

After rejecting insertions in verses 6, 8, 15, 20, and 23 Duhm arranges this chapter in sixteen stanzas of four lines each.

1. For **spoil** read 'oppress.' 'Ah! oppressor, yet thou art not oppressed; . . . . when thou comest to an end in oppressing, shalt thou be oppressed.' If we assume an Isaianic basis, in verses 1–12 at any rate, we may regard the 'oppressor' as in the first instance Sennacherib; but in later times it was referred to the Babylonian power in the days of Nebuchadnezzar, 605–600 B.C. We might assign an approximate date, 601 B.C., to this chapter.

2. The reference of 'their' in **their arm** needs explanation. Duhm, with some probability, thinks that a line has been omitted referring to the warriors of Judah, to which 'their' here refers.

---

[1] The attempt to find an acrostic, 'Simon the wise of heart' = Simon the Maccabee (142 B.C.: cf. Ps. cx), made by Bickell, is only possible by a complete rearrangement of the verses of chap. xxxiii into two parts. Verses 2, 7, 8, 9 are a prayer for help to Yahweh after disastrous defeat, after which we have an acrostic poem made up of a complete rearrangement of the verses as they now stand. Who disarranged them so that we have the present order? The answer is: The Pharisaic faction! Marti, who assigns this chapter to the Maccabaean period, rightly repudiates this ingenious construction.

3 in the time of trouble. At the noise of the tumult the
peoples are fled; at the lifting up of thyself the nations are
4 scattered. And your spoil shall be gathered as the cater-
piller gathereth: as locusts leap shall they leap upon it.
5 The LORD is exalted; for he dwelleth on high: he hath
6 filled Zion with judgement and righteousness. And there
shall be stability in thy times, abundance of salvation,
wisdom and knowledge: the fear of the LORD is his treasure.
7 Behold, their valiant ones cry without: the ambassadors
8 of peace weep bitterly. The high ways lie waste, the
wayfaring man ceaseth: he hath broken the covenant, he

3. Omit the definite article before **peoples** and **nations.**

4. We might with advantage follow Duhm's slight reconstruction of text[1], and render: 'And spoil shall be gathered like the gathering by locusts and like an incursion of grasshoppers coursing over it.'

Of course the spoil here is the spoil which the Jews shall take from their enemies who had previously oppressed them; in this case probably the Babylonians are meant. We have a parallel to the language of verses 1–4 in the oracles of Ḥabaḳḳûḳ, which were written about this time (Driver), i. e. shortly before 600 B.C. Cf. especially Hab. ii. 6–8; and respecting Ḥabaḳḳûḳ see Cornill's *Einleitung*, and Driver in *LOT*^{6}.

5 contains a thoroughly Isaianic conception; compare xxviii. 16, 17.

6: a verse overloaded with substantives, which render any satisfactory construction most difficult. It is impossible to avoid suspecting the hand of the gloss-writer. LXX render the last clause: 'These are the treasures of righteousness,' which presupposes another longer text. The entire verse resembles the production of a later gnome-writer like the author of xxxii. 6–8.

7. The second word in this verse must, we fear, remain a hopeless puzzle, and it would be wisest to refrain from translating it. It seems to be a plural of some noun designating a class of people ('heroes,' 'warriors'?).

8. Duhm and Marti adopt a slightly different reading in place of the word rendered **cities,** namely, the word rendered 'witnesses.' This certainly improves the parallelism of the verse. 'He hath violated the covenant, contemned witnesses.' The LXX afford us

---

[1] Duhm reads *k*^{e}*mô ōseph* in the first clause, and the present writer would also read *k*^{e}*mô shōk* in the second (in place of *mashshak*).

hath despised the cities, he regardeth not man. The 9
land mourneth and languisheth: Lebanon is ashamed and
withereth away: Sharon is like a desert; and Bashan
and Carmel shake off *their leaves.* Now will I arise, saith 10
the LORD; now will I lift up myself; now will I be exalted.
Ye shall conceive chaff, ye shall bring forth stubble: your 11
breath is a fire that shall devour you. And the peoples 12
shall be as the burnings of lime: as thorns cut down, that
are burned in the fire.

Hear, ye that are far off, what I have done; and, ye 13
that are near, acknowledge my might. [**PE ?**] The sinners 14

---

no help, and evidently presuppose another text. The sentiment of our Hebrew text finds a parallel in Ezek. xvii. 18.

9. 'Sharon has become like "the steppe"': perhaps *the Arabah*, or the depression extending from the northern portion of the Dead Sea down to the Gulf of Akabah (see Hastings' *DB.* 'Arabah'). But the comparison in Heb. does not necessarily imply this.

shake off (their leaves), so Kimḥi; and this sense is poetic and appropriate. LXX, however, punctuate and interpret the original word differently: 'Bashan is *bared* and Carmel,' which is more prosaic. Cf. Hab. iii. 9 (Heb.).

Verses 10-13 are Yahweh's response to the appeal of verses 2 foll., which are a cry for help amid the dark times of Israel's oppression.

11 is directed against Babylonia at the close of the seventh century, showing at that time no signs of weakness and decay, but after 560 B.C. clear indications of degeneracy. 'Ye conceive dry grass, ye bring forth stubble.' It is better to render throughout by present tenses rather than by the future.

12. Continue to render with present tenses: 'peoples become burnt to lime—thorns cut off that kindle in the fire': 'burnt to lime' is a free rendering of the more literal **burnings of lime** (Duhm).

13. Duhm follows the LXX in reading indic. perfect: 'Those that are far off have heard, those that are near have perceived my prowess (warlike strength).' So also Marti. This is probably the correct reading.

Verses 14-24 portray the consequences of Yahweh's great deed of deliverance to Jerusalem. In Jerusalem itself the sinners are overwhelmed with fear as the Messianic age dawns; the wicked are destroyed, and only the righteous endure. Jerusalem shall

in Zion are afraid; trembling hath surprised the godless ones. Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire?
15 who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings? He that walketh righteously, and speaketh uprightly; he that despiseth the gain of oppressions, that shaketh his hands from holding of bribes, that stoppeth his ears from hearing of blood, and shutteth his eyes from looking upon evil;
16 he shall dwell on high: his place of defence shall be the munitions of rocks: his bread shall be given *him*; his
17 waters shall be sure. [**Pre-Ex.**] Thine eyes shall see the king in his beauty: they shall behold a far stretching land.

abide under Yahweh's protection, safe from tribulation and hostile attack. We are here moving in the circle of Isaianic ideas—the conception of Zion's inviolability, which exercised so profound an influence in the days of Jeremiah, an optimism which he was powerless to destroy, and which nearly succeeded in destroying him, and was ultimately broken only by the stern logic of facts[1]: cf. Jer. iv. 6, 7, 10 foll.; v. 10-12; vi. 1 foll., 6 foll.; vii. 29-34; ix. 11; xv. 3 foll.; xx, xxi, xxvi, &c.

14. 'Trembling hath seized the unholy. Whom shall we find dwelling by the devouring fire'? Here God is regarded as One who manifests Himself in Zion as a flame of fire devouring the wicked or unholy. The parallels with post-exilian literature should be noted, viz. Pss. xv and xxiv. 3 foll. The **everlasting burnings** (or 'places of burning') is a phrase that reminds us of 'the everlasting doors' (Ps. xxiv. 7), the word *everlasting* being one of the characteristics of what is Divine.

15. The answer to the question raised in the preceding verse. It is only the righteous man who finds in Zion safe protection. Both question and answer resemble Pss. xv and xxiv. Ps. xv. 2 might indeed be an echo of this passage.

Render: 'shaking his hands (*lit.* palms) so as not to take hold of a bribe, stopping his ears so as not to hear of bloodshed,' or listen to murderous plots.

17. The righteous inhabitant of Zion is here addressed. The King is obviously the Messianic King. **A far stretching land,** i. e. no longer restricted by the presence of foes to the city walls as in the closing days of the seventh century, when the national

---

[1] This divergence of standpoint in reference to Jerusalem between the writer of this chapter and Jeremiah is also characteristic of Ḥabaḳḳuḳ. See Cornill's *Einleitung*.

Thine heart shall muse on the terror: where is he that 18
counted, where is he that weighed *the tribute*? where is
he that counted the towers? Thou shalt not see the fierce 19
people, a people of a deep speech that thou canst not per-
ceive; of a strange tongue that thou canst not understand.
Look upon Zion, the city of our solemnities: thine eyes 20

---

existence was threatened by Nebuchadnezzar, but stretching out far and free with unlimited scope for national growth in that happy Messianic age.

18. The word rendered here **muse** is employed by Isaiah in the sense of 'moan' or 'roar' (in reference to an animal). The meaning here 'muse' or 'meditate' is a later use. The times of evil and dread shall one day become things of the past which dwell in the memory only. The days of foreign tyranny and tribute are gone. The registrar who counted out the tribute-money or weighed it has passed away for ever. The 'counting of the towers' is obscure, and Duhm resorts to the device of amending the phrase into 'where is the prefect (*lit.* the tablet-writer) with the mercenaries?' But such an alteration of text is scarcely defensible here, though the meaning be obscure. 'Counting the towers' would be done by the defender of a city before it was attacked or besieged by the foe. This affords us a fairly intelligible interpretation.

19. The word *nôʿāz* rendered by **fierce** occurs here only, and its actual existence is extremely doubtful. Perhaps the explanation of the form given by Gesenius in his *Thesaurus* (607 f.) is correct, and the word is to be rendered 'bold,' 'unabashed' (so Duhm). Render: 'a people of deep speech so that thou canst not hear, stammering with the tongue so that thou canst not understand'—in other words, speaking a mysterious foreign, barbarous and unintelligible language. In the better times that are coming these shall no longer be at our gates. The description here probably applies to foreign, perhaps Indo-Germanic, tribes who were component elements in the armies of Nebuchadnezzar. Compare the similar language of Jer. v. 15, 'a nation whose language thou understandest not, nor comprehendest (hearest) what they say.' Cf. also the description of the 'Chaldaeans' in Hab. i. 5 foll. (probably an older oracle of Ḥabaḳḳuḳ set in the midst of later utterances).

20. For **solemnities** read 'festal days.' This reference to Jerusalem is in full accord with Isaianic feeling and the ideas cherished and instilled by the great prophet a century before (cf. xxviii. 16 foll.).

shall see Jerusalem a quiet habitation, a tent that shall not
be removed, the stakes whereof shall never be plucked up,
21 neither shall any of the cords thereof be broken. But there
the LORD will be with us in majesty, a place of broad rivers
and streams; wherein shall go no galley with oars, neither
22 shall gallant ship pass thereby. For the LORD is our judge,
the LORD is our lawgiver, the LORD is our king; he will
23 save us. Thy tacklings are loosed; they could not
strengthen the foot of their mast, they could not spread
the sail: then was the prey of a great spoil divided; the
24 lame took the prey. And the inhabitant shall not say,
I am sick: the people that dwell therein shall be forgiven
their iniquity.

---

21. 'For there (i. e. in Zion) shall we find Yahweh in majesty.' The rendering **but** is due to the Massoretic Hebrew text. The LXX presuppose here a purer text, which at this point may with some probability be regarded as correct. Render, therefore, 'for,' which is also more intelligible. Continue to read with R. V. (marg.): 'in place (instead) of broad streams on which shall go no fleet propelled by oars, &c.' The writer contrasts Jerusalem, to which Yahweh is a defence better than any fortress or defensive work, with the great cities on the Tigris, Euphrates, or Nile (e. g. Thebes, Nah. ii .7, iii. 8), where rivers or canals formed a powerful military protection. See article 'Siege' in *Enc. Bibl.*

23. 'Her (i. e. the ship's) cords are unloosed, they do not fix firmly the framework of their mast, have not unfurled the flag.' This verse seems misplaced. It should come after verse 21. Following verse 22 it has no proper significance. Marti, adopting a hint from Cheyne (in *SBOT.*), regards this verse in its earlier portion as a marginal gloss taken by some writer from an old elegy on Tyre (cf. Ezek. xxvii. 26-36).

The concluding lines—

> 'Then was the plundered spoil divided in abundance,
> (Even) the lame carried off spoil'—

might be understood as a sequence to verse 22.

24. A final touch in the picture of the Messianic age. No illness befalls the inhabitant. Bodily health corresponds to the peace within of a soul whose sin is forgiven.

[PE] Come near, ye nations, to hear; and hearken, ye 34

Chapters XXXIV, XXXV.

Chapter xxxiv is evidently a post-exilian work, and the same remark applies to the lyrical strains of chap. xxxv, in which the Redemption of Israel is portrayed, the latter forming a fitting contrast and counterpart to the destructive judgment about to overtake Edom, which forms the main theme of the apocalyptic chapter which precedes.

The contents may be briefly set forth. A great judgment of Divine wrath is to befall all the nations (verses 1–4), and its full fury is to descend on Edom in retribution for past misdeeds. The whole land is to be bathed in blood, as though of God's sacrificial slaughter, and demon-shapes shall infest Edom's solitudes, ravaged by the Divine visitation (verses 5–17). The lyrical contrast of chap. xxxv succeeds, probably in consequence of a general principle of prophetic redaction, whereby light follows after the sombre shade. It is, however, generally recognized that the author of xxxiv and of xxxv is the same person, and that there is an integral unity between these two contrasted chapters.

Here, as in chap. xxxiii, we have four-lined stanzas, but each verse in chap. xxxiii is longer (excepting verse 22) than in the present poem, where we have verses consisting of two or three accented syllables, with a more pleasing rhythmic movement. Moreover, the style of chaps. xxxiv, xxxv is more definitely non-Isaianic, and can hardly be assigned even to the Exile period, since we have so many points of contact with post-exilian literature (Psalms, Proverbs, Zechariah, Trito-Isaiah) as well as exilian and pre-exilian writings. The facts of language are here again carefully and fully set forth in Cheyne's *Introd. to Isaiah*, pp. 206–8, and (not so completely) in Dillmann-Kittel's commentary. Another prominent feature is the *apocalyptic colouring*, which is an evident sign of lateness (see especially xxx, verses 1–5 and 8–10), the Divine judgment being portrayed as *universal*, including all nations (verses 1, 2), and the heavens (verses 4, 5) as well as the earth; cf. notes on chaps. xxiv–xxvii. pp. 267–9.

The particular reference to Edom and the Divine judgment upon it gives us the main historic clue whereby the age of this composition may be determined. Cheyne combines Mal. i. 1–5 (where Edom saith: 'We are broken in pieces, yet we will once more rebuild the waste places,' thus saith Yahweh: '*They* may build, yet *I* shall pull down') with the terrible calamities befalling the Edomites to which Diodorus Siculus (xix. 94–9) refers, viz. the incursions of the Nabataeans from Arabia, which are regarded as Divine punishment for the invasions of South Judaea by Edomites during the Exile. These disasters probably befell Edom

peoples: let the earth hear, and the fulness thereof; the
2 world, and all things that come forth of it. For the LORD
hath indignation against all the nations, and fury against
all their host: he hath utterly destroyed them, he hath
3 delivered them to the slaughter. Their slain also shall
be cast out, and the stink of their carcases shall come up,
4 and the mountains shall be melted with their blood. And
all the host of heaven shall be dissolved, and the heavens
shall be rolled together as a scroll: and all their host shall
fade away, as the leaf fadeth from off the vine, and as a

from the days of Malachi towards the close of the fifth century (to which Isa. lxiii. 1-5 also refers), and continued for a considerable time during the fourth century. Probably these chapters were composed during this period[1].

Verses 1-5. The world and its peoples summoned to hear God's *judgment of wrath on all nations.*

1. This opening verse is full of echoes of earlier literature, pre-exilian, exilian, and post-exilian. The invocation of nature is an echo of Isa. i. 2, and perhaps also of Deut. xxxii. 1: **things that come forth** (or 'offspring') is the same expression as that which meets us in chap. xxii. 24, xlii. 5. Ps. xxiv. 1 furnishes a close parallel, but in this case it is difficult to be certain about priority.

2. utterly destroyed: we might with more accuracy render 'devoted to destruction,' or better still 'placed under a Divine ban of destruction.' The original is a gruesome word which belongs to primitive Semitic warfare in which the sacred ban of utter destruction went forth against hostile populations and their property: Joshua viii. 26, x. 28, 37, xi. 11, xii. 21; 1 Sam. xv. 3 foll. The corresponding subst. *herem* occurs in Joshua vi. 18, vii. 12; Zech. xiv. 11; Mal. iii. 24. The second stanza contained in this verse seems to be one line short.

3. For **be melted** read 'flow.'

4. The host of heaven means the stars, which were regarded as spirits: cf. note on i. 9.

---

[1] The tradition of enmity between Israel and Edom which is expressed in the patriarchal legend Gen. xxv. 22-26 became perpetuated in later Jewish literature. See Sanday-Headlam's note on Rom. ix. 12, 13; and cf. Jer. xlix. 7-22; Ps. cxxxvii. 7: *Book of Enoch* lxxxix. 11-12; *Jubilees* xxxvii. 22 foll.; Josephus, *Bell. Jud.* iv. 4. 1 foll. Cf. p. 245 note and 279 (xxv. 10 and note).

fading *leaf* from the fig tree. For my sword hath drunk 5
its fill in heaven: behold, it shall come down upon Edom,
and upon the people of my curse, to judgement. The 6
sword of the LORD is filled with blood, it is made fat with
fatness, with the blood of lambs and goats, with the fat of
the kidneys of rams: for the LORD hath a sacrifice in
Bozrah, and a great slaughter in the land of Edom. And 7
the wild-oxen shall come down with them, and the bullocks

Verses 5–17. *God's special judgment of wrath on Edom.*

5. drunk its fill: i. e. with Divine wrath and in preparation for its grim function of slaughter. **The people of my curse** means 'the people whom I have subjected to my ban, or devoted to destruction'; cf. verse 2.

6. The slaughtered Edomites are compared to sacrificial victims. When we bear in mind the grim tradition of the Divine 'ban,' or *ḥerem*, the metaphor is natural enough. **The fat of the kidneys of rams** reminds us of Lev. iii. 4, 10, 15.

Bozrah (called Bosor in LXX, as though there were no final fem. ending) is the modern *Buṣaire*, and was the capital of Edom. It should be distinguished from a more famous Bozrah in the Hauran. The place was visited by Doughty, who says that small cattle 'to-day abound upon this mountain-side' (*Arabia Deserta*, i. p. 39), which partly explains the sacrificial allusions of the passage. We are reminded of the language of chap. lxiii. 1 foll., where Edom and Bozra are mentioned as the scene of Divine vengeance.

7. The wild-oxen (R.V.) are depicted for us on the Assyrian monuments, from whose portrayals we derive the conception of an animal 'with powerfully-arched neck covered with mane-like hair, which also extended over the shoulder, and possessed also a pair of short bent horns' (Schrader, *Keilinsch. u. Geschichtsforschung*, p. 135 footnote). The Assyrian name for the wild-ox coincides with the Hebrew, viz. *rîmu* (*rêmu*). In the great monolith inscription of Ašur-naṣir-abal, col. iii. 48 foll., that monarch boasts of having slain fifty and captured eight of these *rîmi* with his own hand. Cf. Cylinder Inscription of Tiglath-Pileser I, col. vi. 62–70. Fried. Delitzsch, *Hebrew in the Light of Assyrian Research*, p. 6; see Num. xxiii. 22; Deut. xxxiii. 17; Job xxxix. 9, 10. The rendering of A. V. 'unicorn' is simply a reproduction of the Vulg. *unicornis*, which in turn is based on LXX.

come down is too weak a rendering. Translate: '*fall* down,' slaughtered in the day of Divine vengeance (LXX, Peshiṭto). The verb is similarly used in Hag. ii. 22.

with the bulls; and their land shall be drunken with blood,
8 and their dust made fat with fatness. For it is the day of
the LORD'S vengeance, the year of recompence in the con-
9 troversy of Zion. And the streams thereof shall be turned
into pitch, and the dust thereof into brimstone, and the
10 land thereof shall become burning pitch. It shall not be
quenched night nor day; the smoke thereof shall go up
for ever: from generation to generation it shall lie waste;
11 none shall pass through it for ever and ever. But the pelican
and the porcupine shall possess it; and the owl and the
raven shall dwell therein: and he shall stretch over it the
12 line of confusion, and the plummet of emptiness. They
shall call the nobles thereof to the kingdom, but none shall

---

8. 'The day of vengeance, the year of retribution in Zion's quarrel,' is the visitation on Edom for the assistance which that people rendered to Judah's enemies in bringing about the destruction of Jerusalem, the pursuit of Jewish fugitives, and the annexation of Judaean territory (Obad. 10 foll.; Ezek. xxv. 12, xxxv. 5 foll.; Ps. cxxxvii. 7). Duhm calls attention to the alternation of 'day' and 'year' in this passage, and the close parallel in Isa. lxi. 2, lxiii. 4, which is an indication that the writer of this chapter borrowed from the Trito-Isaiah.

11–15. Birds and beasts and weird demon-shapes shall inhabit the awful solitude created by this Divine visitation of judgment.

11. Instead of **porcupine** (or 'hedgehog') better translate 'bittern'; cf. xiv. 23 note. The context mentions birds only. Against the rendering 'bittern,' however, it has been argued that the *bittern* is a bird of the swamp, and would not inhabit a dry and rugged or mountainous land; see article 'Bittern' in Hastings' *DB.*, and compare Zeph. ii. 14.

Render: 'He (i.e. Yahweh) shall stretch over it the line of chaos (waste) and the plummet of desolation.' The metaphor is derived from building, as in Amos vii. 7–9.

12. Render with R.V. marg.: 'As for her (its) nobles there are none there that proclaim the kingdom.' The verse, however, is evidently incomplete, and does not contain the requisite number of words to make up the necessary two couplets, or four lines. A reference to the LXX (close of preceding verse) shows us how it should be completed, and the verse, as reconstructed by Duhm, might be provisionally accepted as a probable restoration :—

be there; and all her princes shall be nothing. And thorns 13
shall come up in her palaces, nettles and thistles in the
fortresses thereof: and it shall be an habitation of jackals,
a court for ostriches. And the wild beasts of the desert 14
shall meet with the wolves, and the satyr shall cry to his
fellow; yea, the night-monster shall settle there, and shall

'And Satyrs (LXX, ὀνοκένταυροι) shall dwell in it;
Its nobles shall become as nought,
And there is no kingdom which they shall proclaim;
And all its princes shall be no more.'

The fact that the mention of the Satyrs recurs in verse 14 is no objection to the presence of the word in the first line, which is certified by the LXX rendering. The Satyrs were demons conceived as hairy goat-shaped creatures (*s^{e}'irîm*). Cf. xiv. 21, and article 'Demon' in Hastings' *DB.*, p. 591^{a}, and 'Satyr' in *Enc. Bibl.* Demons were held by the ancient Semites to frequent ruined, desolate, and waterless spots. These, with birds and wild animals, shall be the only denizens of the depopulated and ruined Edom, whose greatness and glory shall have vanished.

13. 'And its fortresses shall arise with thorns;
Nettles and thistles shall grow up in its fastnesses.'

The phraseology of the rest of this verse and of that which follows is obviously based on xiii. 21, 22. For **court** we might substitute 'enclosure.'

14. Following the analogy of the corresponding Arabic word, substitute for **wild beasts of the desert** *wild cats*[1]. Also in place of **wolves** render 'hyaenas.' Translate 'the satyr shall *meet* his fellow.' The Hebrew form rendered **cry** bears also the signification 'meet,' being in reality a distinct word. In this way the parallelism with the preceding clause is restored.

'There the night-hag (*Lîlîth*) reposes.' The 'night-hag' or *Lîlîth* was a mythical demon-form like the shaggy satyr. In fact, all the animal-shapes, jackals, hyaenas, &c., were also demon-forms as well, which inhabited lonely spots, like the Arabic *Ghûl* and *'Ifrît*, which infested the desert: cf. article 'Demon' in Hastings' *DB.*, p. 590^{b}, containing references to the *Jinn* of Arabia as well as the Hebrew *Lîlîth*, the night-demon (Babylonian *lilatu*). It is certain that the latter conception was derived by the exilian and post-exilian Judaism from Babylonia Monu-

---

[1] It is impossible in the English rendering to reproduce the assonance or rhymed endings in the first clause of the original: 'wild cats . . . hyaenas.'

15 find her a place of rest. There shall the arrowsnake make
her nest, and lay, and hatch, and gather under her shadow:
yea, there shall the kites be gathered, every one with her
16 mate. Seek ye out of the book of the LORD, and read:
no one of these shall be missing, none shall want her
mate: for my mouth it hath commanded, and his spirit it

mental representations always depict demons with some animal or human form—sometimes both combined.

15. The word for **arrowsnake** is not the form which is read by the LXX, but the closely similar one rendered above 'bittern' (hedgehog, porcupine). We might, perhaps, render: 'the kites gather themselves together, the one the other.' But the harshness of this construction leads us to suspect the text, and this suspicion is confirmed by the LXX. On the whole, we should probably do right to connect the last two words in the Hebrew of this verse with the first of the following: 'Each one seeks his mate.'

16. If we follow the hints afforded by the LXX, we might with fair probability adopt an emended text, and translate: 'Yahweh summons (them) *according to number*; not one of them is missing. [Not one misses his mate[1].] For the mouth of Yahweh hath commanded (it), and His Spirit hath gathered them together.' The conception of 'summoning according to number' has a close parallel in xl. 26, where God marshalls the stars and brings forth their host by number.

On the other hand, both A.V. and R.V. follow our traditional Hebrew text. But the command to the reader to search in Yahweh's book is a remarkable and far-fetched expression. Duhm, though he follows this text in his own rendering, declares it to be 'one of the strangest sentences in all the prophetic writings.' What is the 'book' here meant? The prophet's own writing, small in extent, or the entire collection of Isaiah's oracles, so far as that collection then had extended? According to Duhm it means the former, as we do not anywhere else find a list of Edom's future animal-demon inhabitants. In our opinion neither is meant, but the phrase should be combined with Ps. cxxxix. 16. The expression is a bold poetic appeal to search God's book of fate, where all these future denizens of Edom's desolated abodes

---

[1] Duhm omits this bracketed line, which certainly seems to be a variant duplicate to the line 'Each one seeks his mate' at the close of verse 15, and renders the concluding stanza five-lined instead of four-lined.

hath gathered them. And he hath cast the lot for them, 17
and his hand hath divided it unto them by line: they shall
possess it for ever, from generation to generation shall they
dwell therein.

The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad; 35

---

will be found recorded. But it is extremely doubtful whether it stood in the original text.

17. Among the wild animals and demon-shapes Edom's desolated country is apportioned by lot, just as the promised land was apportioned to Israel. This feature seems of itself to indicate a post-exilian origin for this chapter, since the tradition of the division of the West-Jordan country among the tribes by lot (Num. xxvi. 55 foll., xxxiii. 54, xxxiv. 13, xxxvi. 2 foll.; Josh. xiii. 6, xiv. 2, xxiii. 4) belongs to the *Priestercodex* or to a late documentary source[1].

CHAPTER XXXV.

Israel's deliverance, the return of the dispersed Hebrews, and the advent of the golden age. This brief poem is in the same verse-measure as the preceding chapter, and consists of ten four-lined stanzas. In both we have evidently the same authorship, and both have an eschatological character, but the external link of connexion is not apparent. On the other hand, there is clearly-marked contrast. Instead of the doom of Divine judgment and vengeance on Edom, there is the promise of salvation and Divine blessing on Israel. We have, however, a definite point of contact between the two chapters in xxxiv. 8 and xxxv. 4, in which reference is made to the 'day of vengeance in Zion's quarrel.' This is evidently the underlying keynote in both chapters. In xxxiv the dark side is presented in the utter destruction of Edom, Judah's remorseless foe, and the desolation of her ruined, demon-haunted palaces. In chapter xxxv the bright side is presented in Israel's complete restoration and the final glory of Zion.

The echoes of Deutero-Isaianic and Trito-Isaianic passages are clearly apparent, especially in verses 8–10, in which the 'holy way' to Zion, which the unclean are not to tread, and other traits of the coming golden age, are reminiscences of xl. 3, xli. 18, xliii. 19, xlix. 11, li. 3, 11 (literally copied), lii. 11, 12, lxi. 7, lxii. 10–12.

1. For **solitary place** read with marg. 'parched land.' On the Arabah or **desert**, cf. xxxiii. 9 (and note) to which these two verses give the reverse. We might with appropriateness render:

---

[1] Benzinger, art. 'Los bei den Hebräern,' in *PRE*^{3}., xi. p. 645.

2 and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose. It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing; the glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon: they shall see the glory of the LORD, the excellency of our God.

3 Strengthen ye the weak hands, and confirm the feeble
4 knees. Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not: behold, your God will come *with* vengeance, *with* the recompence of God; he will come and save you.
5 Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears
6 of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb shall sing: for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams
7 in the desert. And the glowing sand shall become a pool, and the thirsty ground springs of water: in the habitation

---

'Let the wilderness . . . be glad; let the desert exult, &c.' The translation **rose** is conventional; LXX render 'lily' (*krīnon*). In the Assyrian *ḫabaṣillatu* we have the same word as in the original Heb. R.V. marg. correctly renders 'autumn crocus,' *colchicum autumnale*, that grows in abundance in the meadows.

3. feeble, or rather with R.V. marg. 'tottering' ('stumbling').

4. For **of a fearful heart** a stronger rendering, 'panic-stricken (or agonized) in mind,' should be substituted. The last clause should properly be, ''Tis *He* will come and save you.' The pronoun in the original is emphatic.

7. The word here rendered **glowing sand** is translated 'heat' in xlix. 10. The interpretation which has attracted most commentators is 'mirage,' since the corresponding word in Arabic, *sarâb*, bears this meaning. Consequently they would render: 'The mirage shall become a [real] lake.' But there are grave objections to this interpretation: (1) It destroys the parallelism of the verse. In the corresponding parallel which follows we have **thirsty ground**, a fairly correct translation of the original. (2) In xlix. 10, where the same word occurs, the rendering 'neither mirage nor sun shall smite them' does not yield an intelligible sense. It therefore seems safer to abandon the rendering 'mirage' and follow the LXX and other versions, and render as above, 'glowing sand.' This is supported by the meaning which belongs to the root in Aramaic, 'to be glowing' (or 'dry'). The verse appears to be an echo of xli. 18.

of jackals, where they lay, shall be grass with reeds and rushes. And an high way shall be there, and a way, and 8 it shall be called The way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those: the wayfaring men, yea fools, shall not err *therein.* No lion shall be 9 there, nor shall any ravenous beast go up thereon, they shall not be found there; but the redeemed shall walk *there*: and the ransomed of the LORD shall return, and 10 come with singing unto Zion; and everlasting joy shall be upon their heads: they shall obtain gladness and joy, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

---

where they lay is very questionable. The original text is most uncertain at this point, as the LXX indicate. Bickell and Duhm would follow the close parallel in xxxiv. 13 in restoring the text here, and would complete the four lines thus:—

> 'In the habitation of jackals (wolves) and hyaenas
> Shall rest your flocks and herds;
> The enclosure of ostriches
> Shall become reeds and rushes.'

Cheyne in *SBOT.* restores the quatrain in like manner.

8. The way for the pilgrim to Zion is to be a *holy* way. Consequently no unclean person is to tread it. 'Unclean' here means heathen. Cf. lii. 1 'uncircumcized and unclean' are not to enter the holy city.

It shall be for those is an extremely doubtful rendering of a very obscure original. Duhm would, following Klostermann and Bredenkamp, make a slight change in the text (*l*^{e} *'ammô* for *lāmô*) and, connecting it with the next two words in the original, would translate: 'seeing that it belongs to His people as they pass along the way'; but, since this line is superfluous to the quatrain, Duhm sets it aside as a gloss.

When we compare the LXX our doubts respecting our Hebrew text increase. Certainly the LXX are not by any means safe guides in textual restoration; yet their rendering of this verse maintains the quatrain stanza and the due balance and parallelism of the clauses:—

> 'And there shall be there a pure way,
> And a holy way shall it be called;
> No unclean person shall pass over it,
> Nor shall there be there an unclean path.'

36 [**Is.**[1]] Now it came to pass in the fourteenth year of king

---

CHAPTERS XXXVI–XXXIX.

Historical Appendix on the Campaign of Sennacherib and Siege of Jerusalem. Illness of Hezekiah, and Embassy of Merodach-Baladan.

This historical appendix to the first portion in the entire collection of Isaiah's and other later prophecies is, with certain exceptions, nearly identical with 2 Kings xviii. 13—xx. 19. These exceptions are (*a*) 2 Kings xviii. 14–16, which are not contained in the Isaianic version, and (*b*) a converse case, Isa. xxxviii. 9–20, which are not contained in the version of 2 Kings. If the latter be inserted into the 2 Kings narrative they would come after chap. xx. 11. As a matter of fact, Isa. xxxviii. 21, 22 are displaced from their true connexion, since they correspond to 2 Kings xx. 7, 8. In the Isaiah version they should be placed between chap. xxxviii. 6 and verses 7, 8.

That these chapters do not proceed from the hand of Isaiah is now recognized by all the leading critics. Formerly Vitringa and Franz Delitzsch assumed that they did on the ground of 2 Chron. xxvi. 22, xxxii. 32, which give a late tradition that Isaiah wrote this historical narrative of his own times just as he had written the annals of Uzziah's reign. But there are many reasons for rejecting this tradition. (1) The reference to the murder of Sennacherib (Isa. xxxvii. 38; 2 Kings xix. 37), which took place in 681 B. C., and can hardly have been an event coming within Isaiah's lifetime. (2) We have also Deuteronomic conceptions and phrases, e. g. xxxvii. 4, 35; xxxviii. 3, 5, which are foreign to Isaiah, and are due to the redactor of the Books of Kings. (3) The language, e. g. 'Jewish language' (xxxvi. 11), 'treasure-house' (xxxix. 2), and many other details, for which the student is referred to Cheyne's *Introd.* p. 222.

A further question arises as to the origin of this historical appendix. Is it to be proximately found in 2 Kings, or in Isaiah? Here the opinion of Cheyne may be cited as sound in principle and result: 'On minor variations [between the Isaiah and the Kings version] no great stress can be laid, both the parallel texts having such a long history behind them. The fact, however, that the writer of Isaiah shows a marked tendency to abbreviate (see especially xxxvi. 2, cf. 2 Kings xviii. 7) confirms the view that Isaiah is dependent on 2 Kings, and not 2 Kings on Isaiah.' A further support to this conclusion may be found in the obvious displacement of Isa. xxxviii. 21, 22 from their right position, to which reference has been made above. Their original and true position may be found in the Kings version. It is quite clear that the motive of this displacement is to be found in the thanksgiving at the close of the Psalm, verses 10–20, placed in the

Hezekiah, that Sennacherib king of Assyria came up

---

mouth of Ḥezeḳiah. The grounds for this gratitude are held to be the recovery of Ḥezeḳiah from illness, the circumstances of which are detailed in verses 21, 22. But it is quite obvious that the position in which they are placed, detached from verses 7 and 8, is thoroughly artificial.

The purpose of this historical supplement to chapters i-xxxv is fairly apparent. It was intended to meet the convenience of the Jewish readers of the oracles of the prophet, who desired to have a clear account of the great historic episode in which he played so distinguished a part (see Introd. p. 68).

The critical investigations of Stade, *ZATW.* (1886), p. 173 foll., followed by those of Winckler in his *Alttestamentliche Untersuchungen* (1892), pp. 26 foll., have clearly revealed the fact that the narrative of Sennacherib's invasion of Palestine and siege of Jerusalem comes from three distinct documents, viz. (*a*) 2 Kings xviii. 14-16; (*b*) 2 Kings xviii. 13, 17—xix. 8 (Isa. xxxvi. 1—xxxvii. 8); and (*c*) 2 Kings xix. 9-37 (Isa. xxxvii. 9-38). Of these three (*a*) is not to be found in the Isaianic compilation. The question arises: Did it exist in the original source in 2 Kings, from which it was borrowed? This appears to the present writer extremely doubtful. Verse 13 in 2 Kings is distinguished from the verses which follow (14-16) by the fact that the name of the king of Judah in the former is *Ḥizḳiyyāhû*, while in the latter it is *Ḥizḳiyyah*. The longer form, which occurs in verse 13, is that which occurs throughout in (*b*) and (*c*), whether in the 2 Kings or the Isaianic recensions. On the other hand, the shorter form in verses 14-16 is that which occurs elsewhere in the same chapter in 2 Kings except in verse 9, where the other form (Ḥizḳiyyāhû) is employed. While no hard and fast critical conclusion can be based solely on this detail respecting the form of the king's name, there is another significant fact which should be carefully noted. Extract (*a*), which is omitted in the Isaiah recension, makes express reference to a donative presented by Ḥezeḳiah to the Assyrian monarch. To this fact there is not the remotest reference in (*b*) and (*c*). This leads us to conclude that this section (*a*), verses 14-16, came to be subsequently incorporated in a later edition of 2 Kings from the royal annals of the kingdom of Judah. The motive of its omission in the earlier edition is obvious, since it is the record of a national humiliation brought about by a king who had been commended by the Deuteronomic redactor (xviii. 3 foll.). That verses 14-16 came from an old and trustworthy source is clearly shown by the fact that its statement regarding the large donative is confirmed by the concluding lines in the portion of the Taylor cylinder that describes the Palestinian campaign of Sennacherib (see *Excursus*, p. 371).

against all the fenced cities of Judah, and took them.

The remaining problems presented to us for solution by these three narratives are their relation to the cuneiform record of the Taylor cylinder and to one another. The dispatch of Rabshakeh and the other envoys to Jerusalem, and the speech of Rabshakeh, with all that follows, described in the second narrative (*b*), belong to the concluding part of the third or Palestinian campaign of Sennacherib, which comes after the battle of Altakû or Eltekeh (see Introduction), and during his halt at Lachish. To this there is no reference in the cuneiform annals. We have no sufficient reason to doubt, as Winckler does[1], whether Jerusalem was actually besieged. The cuneiform annals in this respect fully substantiate the biblical record.

The general outlines and main features of the narrative (*b*) we may regard as trustworthy. Kittel, in his commentary on the Books of Kings, rightly observes that speeches of the character of that which is placed in the mouth of Rabshakeh are not to be taken as verbatim reports, but as representing the general drift and content of what was actually said. We may trust the main outlines of the narrative which Tacitus gives of the campaign of Agricola against Galgacus without accepting the literal accuracy of the report of that chieftain's address to his clans. We may safely concur in Kittel's view, which ascribes the account (*b*) to a comparatively early source, and also in defending it from the charge of being a coloured and biassed production which Meinhold brings against it[2].

The same degree of trustworthiness cannot be ascribed by sober criticism to the narrative (*c*), which is evidently of considerably later origin, viz. from a source which was composed by a biographer of the prophet shortly before the Exile or during the exilian period. Several features in this narrative should be noted:—(1) The enormous number (185,000) of those who were slain by the pestilence. (2) The ascription of the withdrawal of Sennacherib to this cause, whereas the reason assigned in the earlier narrative (*b*) is a 'rumour' which may probably mean the tidings of revolt in Babylonia (see Introduction, p. 41). (3) The lengthy speech of the prophet, xix. 21–34 (Isa. xxxvii. 22–35), which stands contrasted

---

[1] Winckler lays undue stress on the fact that the ordinary Assyrian word for 'besiege' (*lamû*) is not employed. But against the absence of this technical term is to be set the very explicit and graphic description of col. iii, lines 20–23, which the reader may study for himself in the appended translation (see *Excursus*). Cf. Winckler, *Alttestamentliche Untersuchungen*, p. 31.

[2] See Kittel's 'Handcommentar' to Kings, p. 281.

And the king of Assyria sent Rabshakeh from Lachish 2

---

in its length with the brief utterance in (*b*) 2 Kings xix. 6, 7 (Isa. xxxvii. 6, 7). (4) The reference to the death of Sennacherib, which occurred twenty years after his Palestinian campaign (viz. in 681 B.C.). Lastly (5) the mention of Tirhaḳah in Isa. xxxvii. 9 (2 Kings xix. 9) is due to an historic confusion. Guthe[1] supposes that the writer is here referring to a later expedition of Sennacherib, to which his successor Esarhaddon makes an allusion in the prism-inscriptions *A* and *C* col. ii. 55 (cf. col. iii. 3 foll.). See Schrader, *KIB.*, ii. p. 130. This was a campaign by Sennacherib, to the northern part of Arabia, in which a fortress, Adumu, was captured. But this allusion, as well as Herod. ii. 141, form a very slender basis on which to erect a theory that at that time (689 or some following year) Sennacherib came into conflict with Tirhaḳah, and that Ḥezeḳiah became involved in the struggle. Guthe's supposition that Isa. xx. 3 foll., xxx. 1–5, and xxxi. 1–3 must be referred to this later conflict with Assyria, when Egypt actually entered the lists, must be considered to rest upon a very frail support of historic evidence[2]. We have, therefore, no reason to suppose that the narrative (*c*) refers to any subsequent campaign of Sennacherib against Judah. The evidence of the cuneiform records, and the indications afforded by the oracles of Isaiah, go to prove that Egypt took no effective part in the struggle between the Palestinian states and Sennacherib in 701. The princes of the land Muṣri, and the chariot-commanders of the land Meluḫḫa, to which the prism-inscription (Taylor cylinder) of Sennacherib refers in the account of the battle of Altaḳû, are now known, through Winckler's investigations, to be Arabian and not Egyptian and Ethiopian officers. Twenty years ago both Schrader and Delitzsch[3] identified Muṣri with Egypt and Meluḫḫa with Ethiopia. The investigations of Winckler go to prove that the land Muṣri is to be sought in the region south of Judah near to Edom, and that the land Meluḫḫa was situated in North-Western Arabia, east of the gulf of Akaba (Elanitic gulf). See the map at the close of ***KAT.***[3], where these districts are clearly indicated.

There is insufficient evidence to warrant us in assuming that there were two separate campaigns of Sennacherib against

---

[1] *Gesch. des Volkes Israel*, pp. 203 foll. According to Winckler's *Geschichte Israels*, p. 97, this hypothetical second invasion of Palestine by Sennacherib took place somewhere between 689 and 681 B.C.

[2] See Johns' art. 'Sennacherib' in *Enc. Bibl.* col. 4367.

[3] Cf. Fried. Delitzsch's *Wo lag das Paradies?* pp. 105 foll., 130, 137–140, 308, 310.

to Jerusalem unto king Hezekiah with a great army. And
he stood by the conduit of the upper pool in the high way
3 of the fuller's field. Then came forth unto him Eliakim
the son of Hilkiah, which was over the household, and
Shebna the scribe, and Joah the son of Asaph the recorder.
4 And Rabshakeh said unto them, Say ye now to Hezekiah,
Thus saith the great king, the king of Assyria, What
5 confidence is this wherein thou trustest? I say, *thy* counsel

---

Palestine, to which the two accounts (*b*) and (*c*) respectively refer. When we compare these two records the question arises whether we have not two parallel and divergent narratives of one and the same set of negotiations between the deputies of the Assyrian king and of Ḥezeḳiah. This view has commended itself to recent critics.

The notes which follow are much restricted in extent, since almost the entire ground has already been covered in the commentary by Prof. Skinner on the Books of Kings contributed to this Century Bible series. To this volume we would refer the reader. The Hebrew student will find a list of the textual variations between the Isaiah and the Kings version in Kuenen's *Historisch-kritische Einleitung*, II. Theil, pp. 76-8.

xxxvi. **2.** In Isaiah we have only mention of *Rabshaḳeh*, whereas in 2 Kings we have besides the *Tartān*, or chief commander of the Assyrian forces, and also the *Rab-saris* ('chief eunuch' as the word stands in our Hebrew: cf. Jer. xxxix. 3, 13, as well as Dan. i. 3). Fried. Delitzsch, in his *Assyrian Dict.* under *šaḳû* explains the word Rabshaḳeh (in the Assyrian *rab-šaḳû* or *šaḳê*) as a *military* title, meaning 'general.' But if the version in Kings is correct in mentioning the Tartān (Assyrian *Turtanu*) as well as Rabshaḳeh, we then have *two* military officers. It is difficult to see why another military officer should have been sent with the commander-in-chief. Accordingly the view advocated by Zimmern in *KAT.*^{3}, p. 651, that Rabshaḳeh means 'chief cupbearer,' has more intrinsic probability[1].

On **conduit of the upper pool** cf. vii. 3 and note.

3. On the officials here mentioned see *Hebrew Antiquities*, (R. T. S.), p. 150, and cf. 2 Sam. viii. 16-18, 1 Kings iv. 3 foll. Eliaḳim's office is by no means clear. See Nowack, *Lehrbuch der hebräischen Archäologie*, vol. i. pp. 308 foll.

---

[1] See also Zimmern's article in *Zeitschrift der deutschen morgenländischen Gesellschaft*, 1899, pp. 116 foll.

and strength for the war are but vain words: now on whom
dost thou trust, that thou hast rebelled against me?
Behold, thou trustest upon the staff of this bruised reed, 6
even upon Egypt; whereon if a man lean, it will go into
his hand, and pierce it: so is Pharaoh king of Egypt to
all that trust on him. But if thou say unto me, We trust 7
in the LORD our God: is not that he, whose high places
and whose altars Hezekiah hath taken away, and hath said

---

6. It is strange to find Rabshaḳeh emphasizing the arguments which Isaiah had himself employed in former years against the Egyptian alliance (chaps. xx. 3-5, xxx. 7, xxxi. 1-3). The image of the snapped or cracked reed was a current mode of designating weakness or failing strength; comp. xlii. 3.

7. It is most difficult to determine to what extent the reformation described in 2 Kings xviii. 4 was actually carried out, and at what time. It is quite certain that the immense expansion of detail in 2 Chronicles, in which this single verse in 2 Kings has swollen to three chapters, can hardly be treated as historical. It must be remembered that even the earliest redaction of the Books of Kings cannot be assigned to any date previous to about 600 B.C. Consequently in dealing with 2 Kings xviii. 4 we should recollect that the influences of Deuteronomy and the traditions of Josiah's reformation moulded the thought of the redactor and gave a certain colouring to his statement. Wellhausen thinks that Ḥezeḳiah confined himself to the removal of the Ashērah, or sacred pole, from the Jerusalem temple and the destruction of the brazen serpent (cf. Num. xxi. 8, 9) to which offerings had been made[1]. Ḥezeḳiah acted, 'as we may suppose, under the influence

---

[1] *Israelitische u. jüdische Geschichte,* p. 126: cf. Stade, *Gesch. Isr.* i. pp. 507 foll.; *ZATW.*, iii. pp. 8 foll., vi. 170 foll., also Burney on 2 Kings xviii. 1-8. From Jer. xxvi. 17-19 we should infer that the reforming zeal of Ḥezeḳiah was due to Micah the Morashite rather than to Isaiah. Cf. Mic. i. 5 in the Hebrew text. In the LXX on Mic. i. 5 the rendering is not 'high places' (*bāmôth*) but 'sin.' Consequently, some other word than *bāmôth* stood in the original text. Probably, as Nowack, in his commentary on the Minor Prophets, suggests, we should follow the LXX, and read *ḥaṭṭâth bêth,* 'sin of the house of' (Judah). *Bāmôth* arose through corruption of the latter word. This textual fact appears to be ignored by Lotz, in his article 'Hizkia,' *PRE.*^{3}, pp. 147 foll., in which the historical validity of 2 Kings xviii. 4 in all particulars is strongly affirmed.

On the diminishing number of high places in Judah, at the close of

to Judah and to Jerusalem, Ye shall worship before this
8 altar? Now therefore, I pray thee, give pledges to my
master the king of Assyria, and I will give thee two thousand horses, if thou be able on thy part to set riders upon
9 them. How then canst thou turn away the face of one
captain of the least of my master's servants, and put thy
10 trust on Egypt for chariots and for horsemen? And am I
now come up without the LORD against this land to destroy
it? The LORD said unto me, Go up against this land, and
11 destroy it. Then said Eliakim and Shebna and Joah unto
Rabshakeh, Speak, I pray thee, unto thy servants in the
Syrian language; for we understand it: and speak not to
us in the Jews' language, in the ears of the people that are
12 on the wall. But Rabshakeh said, Hath my master sent
me to thy master, and to thee, to speak these words? *hath*

---

of Isaiah's iconoclastic teaching': ii. 8, xvii. 8, xxx. 22, xxxi. 7 (Buchanan Gray, *Numbers*, p. 274). It is, however, difficult to determine the extent to which measures were taken for the suppression of high places. Undoubtedly their maintenance and traditions must have been discountenanced by Hezekiah because their cults were strongly impregnated by foreign influences. Hosea, as well as Isaiah, had already denounced the image-worship.

The time when these measures were taken for the purification of cultus was probably after 701, when the teaching of Isaiah had received its wonderful vindication by the deliverance of Jerusalem from capture, and his personal influence became ascendant in the counsels of the king (so Skinner, *ad loc.*).

Accordingly, we are led to the conclusion that Rabshakeh's utterance in this verse is moulded by the tradition of a later time.

12. Rabshakeh, in his contemptuous rejection of the suggestion of Eliakim and Shebna that he should speak in the unfamiliar Aramaic language (Syrian), instead of the Hebrew (Jewish), which

---

the eighth century, see Introduction, p. 45. On the other hand, it is quite evident that a reactionary influence came into operation in the days of Manasseh and his successor (2 Kings xxi. 3 foll., 20 foll.), when a recrudescence of idolatry and its accompaniments took place: see Jer. ii. 28, iii. 6, vii. 17, 18, 31, xix. 4, 5, 13, &c.; Zeph. i. 4, 5.

he not *sent me* to the men that sit upon the wall, to eat their own dung, and to drink their own water with you?
Then Rabshakeh stood, and cried with a loud voice in 13
the Jews' language, and said, Hear ye the words of the great king, the king of Assyria. Thus saith the king, Let 14
not Hezekiah deceive you; for he shall not be able to deliver you: neither let Hezekiah make you trust in the 15
LORD, saying, The LORD will surely deliver us; this city shall not be given into the hand of the king of Assyria.
Hearken not to Hezekiah: for thus saith the king of 16
Assyria, Make your peace with me, and come out to me; and eat ye every one of his vine, and every one of his fig tree, and drink ye every one the waters of his own cistern:
until I come and take you away to a land like your own 17
land, a land of corn and wine, a land of bread and vineyards. Beware lest Hezekiah persuade you, saying, The 18
LORD will deliver us. Hath any of the gods of the nations delivered his land out of the hand of the king of Assyria?
Where are the gods of Hamath and Arpad? where are 19
the gods of Sepharvaim? and have they delivered Samaria out of my hand? Who are they among all the gods of 20
these countries, that have delivered their country out of my hand, that the LORD should deliver Jerusalem out of my hand? But they held their peace, and answered him 21
not a word: for the king's commandment was, saying,

---

all understood, threatens the people with the dire and degrading extremities to which a prolonged siege would reduce them.

19. Sepharvaim can hardly be the Sipar in Babylonia with which Schrader would seek to identify it, *COT.*, ii. p. 9; cf. pp. 310 foll. Halévy, in *Zeitsch. für Assyr.* (1887) p. 401, connects this Sepharvaim with the Sebraim of Ezek. xlvii. 16, and identifies it with *Shabarain*, situated between Hamath and Damascus, destroyed by Shalmaneser IV. The geographical connexion of the name in the Kings version, 2 Kings xviii. 34, renders this a much more probable view. So also Kittel and Skinner.

22 Answer him not. Then came Eliakim the son of Hilkiah, that was over the household, and Shebna the scribe, and Joah the son of Asaph the recorder, to Hezekiah with their clothes rent, and told him the words of Rabshakeh.

37 And it came to pass, when king Hezekiah heard it, that
he rent his clothes, and covered himself with sackcloth,
2 and went into the house of the LORD. And he sent
Eliakim, who was over the household, and Shebna the
scribe, and the elders of the priests, covered with sackcloth,
3 unto Isaiah the prophet the son of Amoz. And they said
unto him, Thus saith Hezekiah, This day is a day of
trouble, and of rebuke, and of contumely: for the children
are come to the birth, and there is not strength to bring
4 forth. It may be the LORD thy God will hear the words
of Rabshakeh, whom the king of Assyria his master hath
sent to reproach the living God, and will rebuke the words
which the LORD thy God hath heard: wherefore lift up
5 thy prayer for the remnant that is left. So the servants
6 of king Hezekiah came to Isaiah. And Isaiah said unto
them, Thus shall ye say to your master, Thus saith the
LORD, Be not afraid of the words that thou hast heard,
wherewith the servants of the king of Assyria have
7 blasphemed me. Behold, I will put a spirit in him, and
he shall hear a rumour, and shall return unto his own
land; and I will cause him to fall by the sword in his own
land.

8 So Rabshakeh returned, and found the king of Assyria
warring against Libnah: for he had heard that he was
9 departed from Lachish. [**Is.**[2]] And he heard say concern-

---

CHAPTER XXXVII.

8. Libnah, not far from Lachish, but cannot be certainly identified.

9. Here begins the later or second biographical narrative re-

ing Tirhakah king of Ethiopia, He is come out to fight
against thee. And when he heard it, he sent messengers
to Hezekiah, saying, Thus shall ye speak to Hezekiah 10
king of Judah, saying, Let not thy God in whom thou
trustest deceive thee, saying, Jerusalem shall not be given
into the hand of the king of Assyria. Behold, thou hast 11
heard what the kings of Assyria have done to all lands,
by destroying them utterly: and shalt thou be delivered?
Have the gods of the nations delivered them, which my 12
fathers have destroyed, Gozan, and Haran, and Rezeph,
and the children of Eden which were in Telassar? Where 13
is the king of Hamath, and the king of Arpad, and the

---

specting the prophet Isaiah (Is.^{2}). Owing to some error the name of Tirhakah is introduced into the narrative (see Introd. p. 37). Whether the name of the king of Ethiopia (Cûsh) was drawn into the narrative owing to some inference derived from chap. xviii. 1–5, in which reference is made to the embassy on papyrus boats to the court of Ḥezeḳiah, it is impossible to determine. As we have already explained, the 'rumour' in verse 7, which belongs to the earlier biographical narrative (Is.^{1}), should be interpreted as referring to the disaffection against Assyrian authority in Babylonia (Introd. p. 41). The redactor, however, evidently seeks to connect verse 9 with the 'rumour' in verse 7. Is.^{2} begins abruptly as an extract from a document.

12–13: a close parallel to the same argument in chap. xxxvi. 19. This gives colour to the view that we have here in Is.^{2} a parallel narrative of the same visit of Rabshaḳeh as that recorded in Is.^{1}

Reṣeph is the Assyrian *Raṣappa*, or the *Rusâfa* of the Arabian geographers, lying about sixteen miles south of Sura on the Euphrates, situated in the desert on the road from Sura to Palmyra. One of the Tell-el Amarna letters is from a king of this city to Amenophis III. When it was conquered by the Assyrians we do not know. **The children of Edom,** or Benē 'Eden, is the *Bît-'Adini* of the cuneiform inscriptions, situated on both banks of the middle Euphrates. *Tel-assar* means the 'mound' or hill of Assur,' and should be regarded as Assyrian and not Babylonian. It has been found in an inscription of Esarhaddon. It seems to have been the Assyrian name of a region which the Hittite inhabitants called Mitani.

14 king of the city of Sepharvaim, of Hena, and Ivvah? And Hezekiah received the letter from the hand of the messengers, and read it: and Hezekiah went up unto the house
15 of the LORD, and spread it before the LORD. And Heze-
16 kiah prayed unto the LORD, saying, O LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, that sittest upon the cherubim, thou art the God, even thou alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth;
17 thou hast made heaven and earth. Incline thine ear, O LORD, and hear; open thine eyes, O LORD, and see: and hear all the words of Sennacherib, which hath sent to re-
18 proach the living God. Of a truth, LORD, the kings of Assyria have laid waste all the countries, and their land,
19 and have cast their gods into the fire: for they were no gods, but the work of men's hands, wood and stone;
20 therefore they have destroyed them. Now therefore, O LORD our God, save us from his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that thou art the LORD, even thou only.

21 Then Isaiah the son of Amoz sent unto Hezekiah, saying, Thus saith the LORD, the God of Israel, Whereas thou hast prayed to me against Sennacherib king of
22 Assyria, this is the word which the LORD hath spoken concerning him: The virgin daughter of Zion hath despised thee and laughed thee to scorn; the daughter of
23 Jerusalem hath shaken her head at thee. Whom hast thou reproached and blasphemed? and against whom hast thou exalted thy voice and lifted up thine eyes on

---

13. Hena and **Ivvah** should be sought in Syria, as the geographical names in the verse indicate.

15. LXX omit this verse except the word **saying**.

Verses 22–29, introduced by the formula 'this is the word which Yahweh uttered concerning him' (i.e. Sennacherib, referred to in verse 21), are a taunt-song in the elegiac measure described above in notes to chap. xiii.

high? *even* against the Holy One of Israel. By thy 24
servants hast thou reproached the Lord, and hast said,
With the multitude of my chariots am I come up to the
height of the mountains, to the innermost parts of
Lebanon; and I will cut down the tall cedars thereof,
and the choice fir trees thereof: and I will enter into his
farthest height, the forest of his fruitful field. I have 25
digged and drunk water, and with the sole of my feet will
I dry up all the rivers of Egypt. Hast thou not heard 26
how I have done it long ago, and formed it of ancient
times? now have I brought it to pass, that thou shouldest
be to lay waste fenced cities into ruinous heaps. There- 27
fore their inhabitants were of small power, they were
dismayed and confounded; they were as the grass of the
field, and as the green herb, as the grass on the housetops,
and as a field *of corn* before it be grown up. But I know 28
thy sitting down, and thy going out, and thy coming in,
and thy raging against me. Because of thy raging against 29
me, and for that thine arrogancy is come up into mine
ears, therefore will I put my hook in thy nose, and my
bridle in thy lips, and I will turn thee back by the way
by which thou camest. And this shall be the sign 30

---

25. 'I will dry up with the sole of my feet the Nile streams of Egypt' (Māṣôr) can only refer to an invasion of Egypt by Sennacherib. This, however, never took place during Sennacherib's reign, but in that of his successors. We appear to have here the same confusion between earlier and later history as marks the introduction of Tirhakah's name at the beginning of this record (Is.[2]) in verse 9. The expression 'Nile-streams of Maṣôr' (Egypt) occurs in xix. 6. This and some other words and phrases are strange to Isaiah's diction, and indicate that the redaction of this poem belongs to a later time. Together with 30–32, it is interpolated here between verses 21 and 33. It is not improbable that verses 22–32 contain considerable portions of genuine Isaianic matter (so Kittel and Kuenen, *Einleitung*, § 25. 17).

unto thee: ye shall eat this year that which groweth of
itself, and in the second year that which springeth of the
same; and in the third year sow ye, and reap, and plant
31 vineyards, and eat the fruit thereof. And the remnant
that is escaped of the house of Judah shall again take root
32 downward, and bear fruit upward. For out of Jerusalem
shall go forth a remnant, and out of mount Zion they that
shall escape: the zeal of the LORD of hosts shall perform
33 this. Therefore thus saith the LORD concerning the king
of Assyria, He shall not come unto this city, nor shoot an
arrow there, neither shall he come before it with shield,
34 nor cast a mount against it. By the way that he came, by
the same shall he return, and he shall not come unto this
35 city, saith the LORD. For I will defend this city to save
it, for mine own sake, and for my servant David's sake.
36 And the angel of the LORD went forth, and smote in the
camp of the Assyrians a hundred and fourscore and five
thousand: and when men arose early in the morning,
37 behold, they were all dead corpses. So Sennacherib king
of Assyria departed, and went and returned, and dwelt at
38 Nineveh. And it came to pass, as he was worshipping
in the house of Nisroch his god, that Adrammelech and
Sharezer his sons smote him with the sword: and they
escaped into the land of Ararat. And Esar-haddon his
son reigned in his stead.

30–32 is in a different metre from the preceding—an oracle directed to Ḥezeḳiah. Probably it came from the same hand.

33 foll. seems to come most naturally after verse 21.

38. The assassination of Sennacherib by his son is attested by the Babylonian Chronicle, col. iii. 34, 35, where we read: 'In the month Ṭebet, 20th day, there slew Sennacherib King of Assyria his son in an insurrection' (Schrader, *KIB.*, ii. p. 280). The name Nisroch is probably due to a corruption of the name of the Assyrian *Nusku*, god of Fire (Sayce, Halévy, Tiele). Other variants to the form of the name may be found in LXX.

In those days was Hezekiah sick unto death. And 38
Isaiah the prophet the son of Amoz came to him, and said
unto him, Thus saith the Lord, Set thine house in order;
for thou shalt die, and not live. Then Hezekiah turned 2
his face to the wall, and prayed unto the Lord, and said,
Remember now, O Lord, I beseech thee, how I have 3
walked before thee in truth and with a perfect heart, and
have done that which is good in thy sight. And Hezekiah
wept sore. Then came the word of the Lord to Isaiah, 4
saying, Go, and say to Hezekiah, Thus saith the Lord, 5
the God of David thy father, I have heard thy prayer,
I have seen thy tears: behold, I will add unto thy days
fifteen years. And I will deliver thee and this city out of 6
the hand of the king of Assyria: and I will defend this city.
And this shall be the sign unto thee from the Lord, that 7
the Lord will do this thing that he hath spoken: behold, 8
I will cause the shadow on the steps, which is gone down
on the dial of Ahaz with the sun, to return backward

Chapter XXXVIII.

Narrative of Hezekiah's illness and recovery. Here again we have a continuation of the later biographical account of the prophet Isaiah (Is.[2]). Verses 9-20 form an addendum which has evidently been subsequently introduced by a late redactor, perhaps diaskeuast, who united chaps. xxxvi-xxxix to chaps. i-xxxv. Verse 9 resembles the preface to Heb. iii and the titles to the Psalms. Here the Prayer of Hezekiah is called in our Hebrew text a *Michtābh*, which properly means anything written, e. g. a letter, Exod. xxxii. 16, xxxix. 30; Deut. x. 4; 2 Chron. xxi. 12, xxxv. 4. We might connect this with the tradition of Hezekiah's literary activity preserved in Prov. xxv. 1. But the term is weak and colourless, and there is some probability in the ordinary view of modern critics that the word is a corruption of the ordinary Psalm title *Michtām* (Pss. xvi, lvi-lx). The origin and meaning of this word are utterly obscure. The LXX render this by *στηλογραφία*, which at once raises the question whether *Michtābh* may not after all have been the original form which here possesses a special literary sense.

It is very doubtful whether this term stood here in the most ten steps. So the sun returned ten steps on the dial whereon it was gone down.

9 [**R**] The writing of Hezekiah king of Judah, when he had been sick, and was recovered of his sickness.

10 [**Ps.**] I said, In the noontide of my days I shall go
into the gates of the grave:
I am deprived of the residue of my years.
11 I said, I shall not see the LORD, *even* the LORD in the
land of the living:
I shall behold man no more with the inhabitants of
the world.
12 Mine age is removed, and is carried away from me as
a shepherd's tent:

---

ancient copies. The LXX render by 'prayer,' and evidently read here the Hebrew word *Tephillah* as in Hab. iii. 1: cf. titles of Pss. xvii, lxxxvi, xc, cii, &c.

10. 'I thought (*lit.* **said,** i. e. in my heart) I must go (= die) in the quietness of my days.' The quiet time of the day was mid-day. What is meant is the mid-term of Ḥezeḳiah's life: cf. Ps. cii. 25.

Respecting the 'gates of Hades' cf. Ps. ix. 14, cvii. 18; Job xxxviii. 17. In the Babylonian epic 'The Descent of Ishtar to Hades,' Hades is portrayed with seven encircling walls, each with a gateway, each portal with a warder. Schrader, *KIB.*, vi, First Half, pp. 80-90.

deprived: i. e., more accurately, 'punished' or 'mulcted in the residue of my years.'

11. The reading *Yahweh* in place of the duplicated *Yah* is certainly more probable, and is supported by two MSS. (so also Duhm and Marti). The LXX translated an expanded text with Elōhîm (God) in place of Yahweh.

The rendering of R. V. (marg.) 'among them that have ceased to be' is based on our Hebrew text, which reads *ḥādel* (pausal form of *ḥedel*, 'cessation'). This has been supposed to be a term used to designate Sheôl or Hades, where life ceases. But it is probable that we have here a transposition of consonants, and that we should read *ḥāled* (with some Heb. MSS.), **the world** (so A. V. and R. V; also Ewald, Delitzsch, Duhm, Cheyne, &c.): cf. Ps. xlix. 2.

12. Render 'dwelling' (not **age**). Similarly R. V. marg.

I have rolled up like a weaver my life; he will cut me
off from the loom:
From day even to night wilt thou make an end of me.
I quieted *myself* until morning; as a lion, so he 13
breaketh all my bones:
From day even to night wilt thou make an end of me.
Like a swallow *or* a crane, so did I chatter; 14

The Hebrew word is *dôr*, which has here the same meaning as the Arabic *dâr^{un}*, signifying 'house' or 'dwelling.'

Instead of **loom**, render with R. V. marg. 'thrum,' whereby the woven fabric was fastened to the loom.

From day even to night: i. e. in a brief interval. The R. V. renders the verb in Hebrew **make an end of me.** This is a possible meaning. On the other hand, Duhm and Marti follow the more usual signification of the verbal form in their rendering: 'From day to night dost thou deliver me up' [to my sad doom].

13. It is best to follow the Targum rendering, which presupposes a slight emendation of the Hebrew text: 'Until morn have I cried.' In the following clause, for **he breaketh** read 'it [i. e. the agony] breaketh,' &c.

14. The R.V. rendering **swallow . . . crane** (?) is correct. The A.V. inverts the order. The same combination meets us in Jer. viii. 7. A careful examination of the LXX text of that passage shows that the Greek translators could not understand the word rendered 'crane,' and reproduced the Hebrew in Greek characters (*agour*). Subsequent copyists corrupted this into 'swallow *of the field*' (*agrou* instead of *agour*), and thus added the word 'sparrows' from some other text[1]. Klostermann, followed by Guthe, Duhm, and Marti, is therefore wanting in critical insight in supposing that the word for 'crane'(?) was omitted in the Hebrew original of the present passage that stood before the LXX, because no word for 'crane' is found in the Greek rendering. The omission is simply owing to the fact that the Hebrew word was not understood. It is needful to prefix the copula which has been dropped in our Hebrew text (if we assume that the word denotes a bird).

For **chatter** substitute the more descriptive and accurate rendering 'twitter'[2]. The verb in the Hebrew original is that

---

[1] Schleusner, in his *Lexicon Vet. Test.*, suspected this long ago. Cf. Aq. and Symm.

[2] If the crane is the bird really meant, and its note be, as Cheyne (*SBOT.*) describes it, 'a deep, trumpet-like blast,' it is not easy to see the appropriateness of the verb 'twitter,' or perhaps 'squeak,' which

I did mourn as a dove: mine eyes fail *with looking* upward;
O Lord, I am oppressed, be thou my surety.
15 What shall I say? he hath both spoken unto me, and himself hath done it:
I shall go softly all my years because of the bitterness of my soul.

---

which is employed to represent the utterance of the necromancer in viii. 19; cf. also xxix. 4 (last clause). For **mourn** substitute 'moan.' The following clause is obscure. Probably it is best to leave the text unaltered, and render: 'mine eyes faintly looked on high' (where Yahweh dwells).

15 foll. have been generally regarded (e.g. by Kittel and Dillmann) as beginning another section of the song in which thanksgiving succeeds to the plaint of the sufferer. The rendering as the text stands will be:—

> 'What shall I speak? since He hath said unto me, and likewise hath done it.'

This is interpreted to mean that recovery has set in, and the royal sufferer can hardly find words to express his thanksgiving. For the remainder of his years he will be enabled to live in peace and quietness, freed from anxiety or trepidation in consequence of the severe discipline through which he has passed, and the lessons of devout trust which it has taught him.

This is a possible explanation, though it must be confessed that it is obscurely expressed, and some of the words in the original are certainly strange. When we turn to the LXX we find ourselves in the presence of an entirely different Hebrew text. Accordingly, Duhm seeks to make a reconstruction of the text, and renders:—

> 'What shall I utter and say to Him, seeing it is He that hath done it?
> Restless I heave to and fro all my sleeping time . . . because of my soul's bitterness.'

---

is undoubtedly the meaning of the Hebrew. On the other hand, it must be remembered that the identification of the Heb. *'āgûr* with 'crane' by Saadia and Rashi is very doubtful (*Enc. Bibl. sub voce* 'crane': 'somewhat uncertain'). The word *'āgûr* may after all be an epithet of *sûs* (*sîs*), 'swallow,' and the copula in Jer. viii. 7 be due to error, as Hitzig long ago surmised. See Giesebrecht's instructive note in his Commentary on Jeremiah.

O Lord, by these things men live, 16
And wholly therein is the life of my spirit:
Wherefore recover thou me, and make me to live.
Behold, *it was* for *my* peace *that* I had great bitterness: 17
But thou hast in love to my soul delivered it from the
pit of corruption;
For thou hast cast all my sins behind thy back.
For the grave cannot praise thee, death cannot 18
celebrate thee:

Here the plaint of verse 14 is sustained. The poet continues to describe his sufferings. Duhm can make nothing of the Hebrew verb rendered 'go softly' (or as R. V. marg., based on Ps. xlii. 5 (Heb.), translates: 'go in solemn procession'). He therefore makes a slight change, and reads another Hebrew verb (based on Job vii. 4). The verse thus becomes a continuation of the plaint, and leads on to the prayer for recovery in the following verse (16). But here again the text is reconstructed. Cheyne renders: 'What shall I say, and what object against Him, when He Himself has done it?' and leaves considerable gaps in his translation of verses 15, 16.

16. Another most obscure and difficult verse. It is very doubtful whether the rendering given by R. V. is possible, the meaning of which is far from clear. The rendering of the LXX is based on a different Hebrew original, and, working on this foundation, Duhm endeavours to restore the text, which he renders in his earlier edition:—

> 'Lord, about it my heart tells Thee (cf. Ps. xxvii. 8):
> Quicken my spirit, let me recover, and revive me.'

In his later edition he renders: 'Lord, therefore my heart waits on Thee.'

17. The opening of this verse is not to be found in the LXX. Certainly there are peculiarities of expression, which render the Hebrew text before us suspicious. It is doubtful in the light of the LXX, and for other reasons, whether the Hebrew original for 'thou hast loved my soul' (R. V. marg. and literal rendering) should be retained. A slight modification in the form yields the meaning of the LXX version: 'Thou hast *withdrawn* (or held back) my soul from the pit of destruction' (R. V. 'corruption'). So Houbigant, Lowth, Ewald, &c.: cf. Ps. lxxviii. 50; Job xxxiii. 18.

18. For **cannot** in both clauses read 'doth not.' Parallels to these conceptions of the condition of the dead in Sheôl or Hades

They that go down into the pit cannot hope for thy truth.
19 The living, the living, he shall praise thee, as I do this day:
The father to the children shall make known thy truth.
20 The LORD is *ready* to save me:
Therefore we will sing my songs to the stringed instruments
All the days of our life in the house of the LORD.

21 [Is.[2]] Now Isaiah had said, Let them take a cake of figs, and lay it for a plaister upon the boil, and he shall
22 recover. Hezekiah also had said, What is the sign that I shall go up to the house of the LORD?

39 At that time Merodach-baladan the son of Baladan, king of Babylon, sent letters and a present to Hezekiah: for
2 he heard that he had been sick, and was recovered. And Hezekiah was glad of them, and shewed them the house of his precious things, the silver, and the gold, and the spices, and the precious oil, and all the house of his armour, and all that was found in his treasures: there was nothing in his house, nor in all his dominion, that Hezekiah shewed
3 them not. Then came Isaiah the prophet unto king Hezekiah, and said unto him, What said these men? and

---

may be found in Ps. vi. 5 (6 Heb.), xxx. 9 (10 Heb.), lxxxviii. 11, 12, cxv. 17.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

This is a continuation of the same biographical narrative as that of the preceding chapter (Is.[2]). Respecting Merodach-Baladan and his embassy, see Introduction, pp. 29, 30. The date may accordingly be fixed for the year 704 B. C. It is scarcely probable that during Sargon's reign, when Merodach-Baladan was reigning in Babylon, 721 to 710 B. C., Ḥezekiah would have ventured to receive an embassy from the persistent foe of Assyria. There are strong reasons for rejecting Winckler's theory that this embassy took place in 719 B. C. (see Introd., p. 30 footnote).

from whence came they unto thee? And Hezekiah said, They are come from a far country unto me, even from Babylon. Then said he, What have they seen in thine 4 house? And Hezekiah answered, All that is in mine house have they seen: there is nothing among my treasures that I have not shewed them. Then said Isaiah to Hezekiah, 5 Hear the word of the LORD of hosts. Behold, the days 6 come, that all that is in thine house, and that which thy fathers have laid up in store until this day, shall be carried to Babylon: nothing shall be left, saith the LORD. And of 7 thy sons that shall issue from thee, which thou shalt beget, shall they take away; and they shall be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon. Then said Hezekiah unto 8 Isaiah, Good is the word of the LORD which thou hast spoken. He said moreover, For there shall be peace and truth in my days.

Philistine threat

Saul – 1st King.
Saul – a prophet:–
– David :– master stroke – Jerusalem as the
capital – royal city – pol. neutral
– religious significance
– pol. organization modelled after the Egyptian
establishment.
– real credit for consolidating the Is.'s kingdom
– Is. great prosperity under Solomon – but close
David –
– Dynastic principle → prevails in Isr.
through the Oracle of Nathan.

EXCURSUS

Extract from the Prism-Inscription (Taylor cylinder) of Sennacherib, narrating his Palestinian campaign (701 B.C.).

(Col. ii. 34—col. iii. 41 in Bezold's revised text in Schrader, *KIB.*, ii. pp. 90 foll.)

(Col. ii. 34) In my third campaign I marched to the land Ḥatti (Hittite) (35) Luli (Elulaeus), king of Ṣidon, the terror (inspired by) the splendour (36) of my rule had overwhelmed; far away (37) amid the sea he fled, and his land I subjugated, (38) Ṣidon the great, and Ṣidon the less, (39) Bêt-zitti, Ṣarepta, Maḥalliba, (40) Ushû, Akzibi (Ekdippa), Akko, (41) his strong towns, the fortresses, spots of pasturage (42) and of watering, his garrison-towns, the power of the weapons (43) of Ashur, my lord, overwhelmed. They subjected themselves (44) to my feet. Tuba'lu (Ethba'al) I placed on the royal throne (*lit.* throne of royalty) (45) over them, and imposed upon him payment of (46) yearly unceasing tribute of my supremacy. (47) Minḥimmu (Menaḥem) of Samsimuruna, (48) Tuba'lu (Ethba'al) of Ṣidon, (49) Abdili'ti of Arvad (Arados), (50) Urumilk (Jerumelech ?) of Gebal (Byblus), (51) Mitinti of Ashdod, (52) Buduilu of Bêth-Ammon, (53) Kammusunadab (Chemoshnadab) of Moab, (54) Malikrammu (Malchiram) of Edom, (55) all kings of Martu (the Western country), (56) brought large gifts, rich products as well as possessions, (57) into my presence, and kissed my feet[1]. (58) But as for Ṣidḳâ, king of Ashḳelon, (59) who had not submitted himself to my yoke, the gods of his ancestral house (*lit.* of the house of his father), himself, (60) his wife, his sons, his brothers, the seed (posterity) of his ancestral house, (61) I carried off and brought to Assyria; (62) Sharrudâri, son of Rukibti, their former king, (63) I set over the inhabitants of Ashḳelon, the payment of the tribute (64) of subjection I appointed, imposed (?) my yoke. (65) In the onward advance of my campaign I besieged, captured, and plundered of their booty Bêth Dagon, (66) Joppa, Benê-barḳa (Benê-baraḳ), Azuru, (67) towns of Ṣidḳâ which had not speedily (68) subjected themselves to my feet. (69) The rulers, the chief men, and the [other] inhabitants of Amḳarruna (Eḳron) (70) who had cast Padi (who according to law and covenant with Assyria (71) was their king) into iron chains, and had delivered him up (72) to Ḥezeḳiah of Judah with hostile purpose. He bound him in prison. (73) Their heart feared. The kings of the land Muṣri (Muṣuri) summoned (74) archers, chariots, the steeds of the king of Meluḫḫi, (75) an innumerable host, and came (76) to their aid. Before Altaḳu (Elteḳeh) (77) the battle array was set confronting me, they raised (?) (78) their weapons. In reliance upon Ashur, my lord, with them (79) I fought and brought about their defeat. (80) The commander of chariots and the sons of the king of (the land) Muṣri, (81) as well as the commander of chariots of the king of (the land) Meluḫḫi alive, (82) in the midst of the battle, my hand captured. Altaḳu (83) (and) Tamnâ (Timnath) I besieged, captured, and carried off their booty.

---

[1] The usual token of homage from the representative of a subject state to his overlord: cf. Ps. ii. 12.

(Col. iii. 1) I advanced to Amḳarruna (Eḳron), the rulers, (2) the chief men who had incurred sin (i. e. revolted), I slew. (3) On poles (? pillars) around the town I hung (bound) their corpses. (4) The inhabitants of the town who had practised evil deeds and outrages (5) I reckoned as prisoners of war (spoil); as for the remainder of them (6) who had not instigated (?) sin or misdeed, (7) who had not committed their trespasses, their pardon I proclaimed. Padi (8) their king I brought forth from [the midst of] Jerusalem, (9), (and) placed (him) on the throne of rule over them. (10) The tribute of my rule (11) I imposed on him. And as for Ḥezeḳiah (12) the Jew, who had not submitted himself to my yoke, (13) forty-six strong towns, fortresses, and smaller towns (14) in their circuit which are innumerable, (15) by destruction through battering-rams and advancing of siege-engines, (16) assault . . . (17) I besieged, I captured; 200,150 men, young (and) old, male (and) female, (18) horses, mules, asses, oxen, (19) and flocks without number I brought forth from their midst (20) I reckoned as spoil. Himself like a bird in a cage in the midst of Jerusalem, (21) his royal town, I shut, ramparts around him (22) I drew; those who came forth from the gateway of his town I caused to return. (23) His towns which I had plundered (24) I separated from his land and gave it to Mitinti king of Ashdod, (25) Padi king of Amḳarruna (Eḳron), and Ṣil-Bêl (26), king of Ḥaziti (Gaza), (and so) diminished his land. (27) To their former tribute, their yearly gift, (28) the payment due to my rule I added (29) (and) imposed it upon them. Ḥezeḳiah himself (30) the dread of the splendour of my rule overpowered. (31) The Urbi (Arabians) and his faithful soldiers (32) which he had introduced to strengthen (defend) Jerusalem, his royal town (?), (33) laid down their arms. (34) Along with thirty talents of gold, 800 talents of silver, precious stones (35) of value, large lapis-lazuli stones, (36) ivory couches, ivory seats made of elephant-hide, (37) ivory . . . wood, urkarinnu wood, all kinds of valuable treasure (38), and his daughters, his palace-wives, male and (39) female attendants (?), I caused to be brought after me into Nineveh my royal town; (40) and he sent his (mounted) envoy to present tribute (41) and render homage.

ADDENDA

Pp. 17–19. The present writer is unable to follow recent critics from Nowack (1880) to Harper (1905) in abandoning the tradition contained in the superscription to Hosea's oracles, and in making 735 the *terminus ad quem* of Hosea's prophetic activity. Far too much has been made of the absence of express allusion to the Syro-Ephraimite War. On the other hand, the clear references to Assyria and to the utter social disorganization of the northern kingdom, to which numerous passages allude, point to a period subsequent to rather than before the Assyrian invasion in 734–2. Chap. vi. 1, 2, 8–9; vii. 9 (foreigners have devoured his strength); viii. 4 (presupposing an interval of several reigns since the end of the dynasty of Jehu); ix. 15; xii. 12 (altars in Gilgal transformed into ruined stone-heaps) are best explained when Tiglath-Pileser's campaign is placed in retrospect. Winckler, *KAT.*^{3}, p. 264, thinks that it is owing to this invasion and dismemberment of the northern kingdom that Hosea hardly ever speaks of Israel but of *Ephraim*.

Pp. 20–24. Among the O. T. data for placing the beginning of Ḥezeḳiah's reign before the capture of Samaria must be included the significant passage Jer. xxvi. 18 f., which cannot be so summarily dismissed from consideration as Cornill (Introd. to the O. T. under the section devoted to Micah) is disposed to insist. That the name of Ḥezeḳiah should displace that of Aḥaz for the years 726–715 is easily explicable when the atmosphere of religious legalism is duly considered from which men and policies were estimated after 622 B. C.

P. 88 *ad fin.* p. 183. It is impossible in this work to explain Hebrew poetic metre based on special accentual stress on certain syllables. The English student of Hebrew is referred to Harper's recently-published commentary on Amos and Hosea, Introd. pp. clxvi–clxviii, and on the Ḳinah metre, p. 109. Comp. also *Enc. Bibl.* under 'Poetical Literature,' col. 3,802 foll.

INDEX

Abel-maachah, 14.
Aben-Ezra, 133.
Abraham, 312.
Admah, 18.
Adonis, 220.
Aeschylus, 136.
Aḥab, 11, 52, 198.
Aḥaz, 6, 11 foll., 20, 22, 23 ff., 30 n., 128, 130, 132, 168, 198 f., 296, 310.
'Ai ('Ayyath), 171.
Alexander Jannaeus, 179, 205, 270.
Alexander the Great, 198, 277.
Altaḳû (Elteḳeh), 36, 353, 371.
Altar, 228.
Amarna, Tell el (tablets), 218, 304 n.
Amen-Hotep (Amenophis) III, 32.
'Ammôn, Ammonites, 35, 180, 279.
Amorites, 219.
Amos, 8, 25, 46, 49, 50–52, 121, 168, 250, 292.
Amulet, 108.
Anathoth, 172.
Anklets (Ankle-chains), 107.
Anshân : *see* Anzàn.
Antiochus Sidetes, 270.
Anzân (Anshân), 178, 188, 241.
Apocalyptic, 267 ff., 275, 341.
'Ar (Moab), 206.
Arab, 247, 371.
'Arabah, 209, 337.
Arabia, North (*see* Muṣri), 37, 42, 48, 246 foll., 296, 371.
Aralu, 194.
Aram : *see* Syria.
Archers, 249, 252 f.
Areopolis, 206.
Ariel (Aral), 303 f., 305 f.
Ark of God, 50.
Arnon, 206, 211, 216.
Aroer, 216.
Arpad, 9, 163.
Arrow-snake, 346.
Artaxerxes Ochus, 277.
Ashdod, 7, 19, 26, 31, 35, 200 f., 237, 240, 315, 370.
Asher, 14.
Ashērah (Ashērim), 45, 47, 97, 218, 290, 355.
Ashḳelon, 7, 12, 35, 370.
'Ashtoreth, 46, 47, 212 n., 218, 265 f.
Ashur(Ašur)-bani-pal, 4, 17, 198, 233, 249, 260, 261.
Ashur(Ašur)-naṣir-pal, 164 n., 165.
Assyria, *passim*.
Astyages, 188.
'Ayyath : *see* 'Ai.
'Azariah : *see* Uzzìah.
'Azazel, 316.

Ba'al, 44 and n., 47, 212 n., 265 f., 300.
Babylon, 184, 240 f., 270.
Babylonia, 20, 28 f., 182 f., 197, 199, 241, 242, 244, 261, 321, 337.
Babylonian Chronicle, 29 n., 362.
Bädeker, 208, 293.
Ban (*ḥerem*), 342 f.
Barth, 295 n.
Barton, 47 n., 95, 218.
Bashan, 337.
Bäthgen, 47.
Baudissin, 97.
Bayith, 205, 206 f.

Bee, 136.
Beer-Elim, 209.
Bel-ibni, 29.
Belti (Ba'alat), 160.
Ben-hadad, 11.
Bennett, 78, 194, 303.
Benzinger, 138, 147 n.
Bêth-Ammon, 370.
Bèth-Dagon, 35, 370.
Bêth-êl, 44.
Bêth-'Omri, 14 (*see* Samaria).
Bêth-Yaḳin, 41 n.
Bevan, 105.
Bezold, 257 n., 370.
Bickell, 349.
Bittern, 197, 346.
Bliss, 310.
Booth: *see* Tabernacles and Garden.
Botta, 8.
Bozrah, 343.
Bracelets, 108.
Bredenkamp, 349.
Bribery, 118.
Brook of Egypt, 291.
Brown, Francis, 248.
Bruce-Taylor, 97.
Buhl, 244.
Bunsen, 133.
Burney, 355.
Byblus (Gebal), 370.
Byron, 292.

Caldwell, Bishop, 187.
Calf-worship, 44.
Cambyses, 227.
Canaan, 44, 198 (Yahweh's land), 219.
Canon of Rulers, 79 f., 162, 200.
Carchemish, 161, 162.
Chaldaeans, 261, 265.
Chariots, 46, 252 f.
Charles, 115.
Chasidîm, 270.
Chemosh, 214.
Cheyne, 63, 75 and *passim.*
Chronology, 20 f., 81 f.
Churl, 330.
Clemens Alexandrinus, 72.
Club (mace), 149, 189, 323.
Consecration, 121.
Corn harvest, 225.
Cornill, 99, 338.
Cosmogony 217 (Yahwistic), 274.
Covenant, 46, 313 and n.
Crane, 365 and n.
Crescents, 108.
Crocodile, 286.
Crocus autumn, 348.
Cultus: *see* Worship.
Cummel, 301.
Cummin, 301.
Curds (milk), 135.
Cush: *see* Ethiopia.
Cyprus, 212, 262, 264.
Cyrus (the Great), 5, 185, 241, 243.

Dagon, 50.
Damascus, 9, 163, 215 f.
Daughter, personification, 91, 173, 264.
David, 147, 212, 213, 299, 304, 305.
Day of the Lord (Yahweh), 184.
Dead Sea, 209.
Dedan, 247 f.
Delitzsch, Franz, 8, 143, 169, 208, 230, 243, 267 f., 280, 284, 311, 350.
Delitzsch, Friedr., 3 n., 188, 262, 354.
Demon, 190, 276, 316, 341, 345 f. *See* Jinn.
Deutero-Isaiah, 64, 243, 321.
Deuteronomy, 25, 45, 228, 234.
Deutero-Zechariah, 270.
Diaspora of Hebrews, 177, 273.
Dibòn, 206 f. (Dibân), 209, 216.
Diestel, 76 n.
Dillmann, 76, 99, 203, 220, 283, 317 n.
Dimòn, 209.

Dirge, 182 f., 206 f., 250, (= Ḳinah).
Divination : *see* Soothsaying.
Dôd, 112.
Doughty (*Arabia Deserta*), 93, 135, 247.
Dragon, 286 : *see* Tiâmat.
Driver, 63, 75, 172, 186, 187, 221.
Drunkard, Drunkenness, 44, 48, 115, 118.
Duhm, 75 f., and *passim*.
Dumah, 245, 246.
Dûr, 305.
Durilu, 30 n.
Dûr-Jakin, 241.

Ear-drop, 108.
Early rain, 320.
Ecclesiasticus, 70 f.
Edom, 11, 12, 26 n., 35, 179 f., 204 n., 205, 210, 240, 242, 245, 341, 342-7.
'Eglaim, 209.
'Eglath Shelishiyyah, 207 f.
Egypt, 6, 7, 14, 17, 19, 24, 26-8, 33, 37, 136, 198, 226-36, 240, 260, 263, 292, 297, 310, 312, 313, 318, 324 f., 361.
Eichhorn, 135.
'Eḳron (Amḳarruna), 7, 36, 38, 91, 202 n., 251, 370 f.
'Elâm, 5, 29, 178, 199 n., 241 f., 244, 252.
Elath, 102, 103, 204 n., 210.
Elealeh, 207, 213.
Eliaḳim, 255 f., 354.
Elteḳeh : *see* Altaḳû.
Elulaeus (Luli), 35, 260, 370.
Enoch, Book of, 268, 275.
Ephah, 114.
Epiphanius, 72.
Eponym Canon, 79 f.
Esarhaddon, 8, 260, 261, 263.
Eschatology, 57 f., 116, 275 f.
Eshmun'azar's inscription, 124.
Ethanim : *see* Tishri.
Ethba'al, 260, 370.
Ethiopia (Cûsh), 26, 28, 33, 222, 240.
Euphrates, 15, 224.
Evil Eye, 108.
Ewald, 8, 88, 131, 143, 201, 210 n., 221, 245, 296.
Exile, 168, 177, 286, 312.
Ezeḳiel, 126, 168, 246, 265, 267, 275 f., (Eschatology) 312, 321.

Faith, 57, 61.
Faithfulness, 176.
Feasts, 45, 50.
Fly, 136.
Foreign usages, 48.

Gallim, 172.
Garden, 97, 220; Garden-hut (booth), 274.
Gaza, 7, 13, 198, 371.
Gazelle, 187.
Geba', 171 f., 300.
Gebim, 172.
Gê-Hinnôm, 193.
Geiger, 191.
Gesenius, 90, 133, 208, 210 n., 216, 221, 243, 246, 277, 313, 339.
Ghûl, 345.
Gibeah of Saul, 172.
Gibeon, 299, 300.
Giesebrecht, 159, 205, 366 n.
Gilead, 14, 48.
Girdle, 108, 118, 176 (symbol).
Glaser, 13.
Glass, 108.
Glory, 322.
Gog, 321.
Golden age, 347 f.
Gomer bath-Diblaim, 95.
Gomorrha, 91.
Gray (Buchanan), 59 n., 112, 205 n., 356.
Gunkel, 95, 193 n., 286.

Guthe, 24, 26, 59, 247, 298, 311, 313, 329, 365.

Ḥabaḳḳuḳ, 336, 339.
Hackmann, 59, 151, 294, 327.
Hadad (Adad), 3 n., 112.
Hadad-'ezer : *see* Ben-hadad.
Hadad-Rimmon, 171.
Hades (Hell), 115 ff., 131, 182, 193, 297, 364.
Hagar, 18.
Hagen, 188 n.
Halluḥîth, 205 : *see* Luḥîth.
Ḥamath, 25 n., 163.
Hand-mirror, 109.
Ḥanes, 315.
Ḥanno (Ḥanunu), 13, 14, 200.
Harper, 372.
Ḥazaēl, 3.
Head-tire, 109.
Heaven, 322.
Hedgehog, 346.
Heliopolis, 233 f.
Henderson, 8, 132.
Hengstenberg, 132.
Heracleopolis Magna, 315.
Ḥerem (Ban), 23, 342.
Heres, 233.
Ḥeshbôn, 205, 207, 213.
Ḥezeḳiah, 6, 20, 21 f., 26 f., 29 f., 33, 36 f., 104, 145, 161, 162, 167, 199 n., 200, 202 and n., 240 n., 292, 370 f.
Higher criticism, 64.
High places, 11, 44, 48.
Ḥîram, 9, 10.
Hird, 80.
Ḥittites, 7.
Hitzig, 133, 204, 208, 210 n., 246, 277, 296 n.
Ḥivites, 219.
Holy, 55, 123 f., 317, 347, Holy One of Israel, 40, 55, 117.
Homer, 136.
Ḥomer, 114 (10 ephahs).
Hommel, 13, 17, 149 n., 219, 224 n., 239 n.
Horonaim, 208.
Horse, 318.
Hosea', 8, 17-19, 25, 27, 44, 46, 48, 52, 54 (Isaiah's debt to), 121, 145.
Hoshea', 6, 14 f., 17, 20, 21, 23.
Houbigant, 367.
Humbanigash, 199 n., 241.
Hupfeld, 201.
Hyaena, 345.
Hyrcanus, John, 76 n., 205, 270, 280.

Idolatry, 55, 56 ; idols, 102, 104.
'Ifrît, 345.
Images, graven, 193 : *see* Idolatry.
'Immanuel, 27, 57, 61, 120 (*Book of Immanuel*), 131 f., 134, 135, 141, 168, 297.
Incense, 94.
Ingathering, Feast of : *see* Tabernacles.
Isaiah, *passim*.
Ishtar, 192, 364.
It'amar, 247.
Iyyon, 14.

Jackal, 190, 345.
Jacob, 216.
Jâdi : *see* Jaudi.
Jahaz (Jahaṣ), 205, 207.
Jastrow, 125, 220 n., 332.
Jazer, 213.
Jau-bi'di, 130.
Jaudi(-du) = land Jâdi, 9, 25 n.
Jehoaḥaz, 3, 12 (= Aḥaz).
Jehoram, 208.
Jehoshaphat, 208.
Jehu, 10, 12.
Jemen : *see* Yemen.
Jensen, 194.
Jeremiah, 25, 32, 47, 63, 152, 174 f., 338.
Jeremias, 304 n.
Jeroboam II, 4, 204.

Jerusalem, 7, 21, 139, 223, 249, 280, 296, 303, 306, 371.
Jesse, 174 f., 177.
Jesus Sirachides, 70, 205.
Jinn, 190, 316, 345.
Johns, 35, 353.
Jonah son of Amittai, 204.
Joppa, 35, 370.
Josephus, 228, 260, 342 n.
Jotham, 11, 12.
Judge, 92.
Judges, Book of, 45.
Judgment, 113.

Kalno, 162 f.
Kamphausen, 22.
Karḳar, 11.
Ḳedar, 248.
Ḳedēshîm (*-ôth*), 47.
Kenites, 186.
Keshta, 28.
Key, 258.
Kimḥi, 311.
Ḳinah: *see* Dirge.
Kings, Books of, 44, 47, 350 f.
Ḳir, 204, Ḳir-Moab, 206; Ḳir Hareseth, 206, 213.
Kittel, 77, 191, 197, 203, 210 n., 221, 230, 242, 244, 293, 294, 319, 323, 328, 352, 357.
Klostermann, 349, 365.
Knobel, 76, 221.
König, 99.
Koppe, 201, 283.
Kosmelech, 12.
Kuenen, 133, 205 n, 247, 315, 334, 361.

Lachish, 7, 36, 41, 358.
Ladanum (Lōt), 278.
Lagarde, 98, 159 f., 216.
Land-owners, 42, 43.
Layard, 8.
Leontopolis, 233 n.
Leviathan, 286.
Libnah, 358.
Lilith, 345.
Lord of Hosts, 57, 92.
Lot, 347.
Loving-kindness (*ḥesed*), 53.
Lower world: *see* Hades.
Lowth, 135, 277, 305, 333.
Lucifer, 193.
Luḥîth, 205, 208: *see* Halluḥith.
Luli: *see* Elulaeus.
Luther, 143.
Lye, 96: *see* Soap.
Lytton (Lord), 6.

Mace: *see* Rod and Club.
Madmēnah, 172.
Mahēr-shālāl-ḥāsh-baz, 72, 138, 144.
Ma'in, 149 n.
Manasseh, 158, 356 n.
Manes (Elohim), 145.
Marduk, 286, 316.
Margoliouth, 249.
Marti, 76 and *passim*.
Māshāl (taunt-song), 206 n.
Maṣṣēbah, 44, 218: *see* Pillar.
Max-Müller, 5, 28, 219, 231, 315 n.
Mēdebā, 206 f.
Media, Medes, 184 f., 188, 241 f., 244.
Meinhold, 352.
Meluḥḥa, 353, 371.
Memphis: *see* Noph.
Menahem, 6, 10, 12 [370].
Menander, 260, 263.
Merodach-Baladan, 28–30, 41, 161, 183, 194 n., 199 n., 241, 261, 368 f.
Mēsha', 204, 208.
Messiah, 61 f., 151 f., 174 f., 327 f.
Meyer, 260.
Micah, 8, 48 n., 98 f., 355.
Micaiah, 92.
Michmash, 171.
Michtābh (Michtām), 363.
Midian, 149 n.
Migron, 171.

Minaean, 18.
Mirage, 348.
Miṣri, 17.
Mitinti, 12, 35, 91, 370.
Moab, 26 n., 179 f., 203 f., 240, 249, 279, 371.
Moabite Stone, 204, 207.
Moloch, 193, 324.
Moon, 276, 321.
Moore, 218, 321.
Mountain of Assembly, 194.
Muḥammad (Mohammed), 107.
Mushêzib-Marduk, 41.
Muṣri (Muṣrân), 13, 17, 37, 149 n., 200, 224 n., 315, 353, 370, 371.

Nabonidus (Nabû-nâïd), 185, 188, 194.
Nägelsbach, 242.
Name, 322.
Naphtali, 14.
Nebaiôth, 248 f.
Nebo (Nabû), 111 n.
Nebo (Moab), 206 f., 246.
Nebuchadnezzar (properly Nebuchadrezzar), 194, 245, 260, 261, 279, 338, 339.
Necromancer (Necromancy), 56, 145, 297, 305.
Negebh, 242, 315 and n.
Nergal, 184 n.
Nile, 224, 226 ; Blue Nile, 224.
Nimrim, 208.
Nimrod, 312 n.
Nineveh, 371.
Nisroch, 362 = Nusku.
Nob, 172.
Nöldeke, 245, 248.
Nōph = Mōph (Hos. ix. 5); Memphis, 231.
Nowack, 354, 372.
Nubia, 224.
Nusku : *see* Nisroch.

Oblation, 94.
Olshausen, 295 n.
'Omri, 3, 46, 204, 210, 216.
Onias, 228, 234.
Ophir, 103, 187 and n.
'Oreb, 170.
Orelli, 133, 168, 216, 242, 284, 311.
Orion, 51.
Osiris, 160.
Ox, wild (*rêmu*), 343.

Padi, 36, 91, 202 n., 251, 370, 371.
Palestine, 7 (strategic position) and *passim*.
Paradise, 62.
Parshiyyôth, 242.
Paterson, 313 n.
Pathros, 178.
Peasant, 42, 114.
Pekaḥ, 10, 11, 14 f., 17, 20, 22, 200.
Pekaḥiah, 10.
Persians, 188, 241.
Petra : *see* Sela.
Pharaoh Hophra, 5.
Philistia, Philistines, 11-13, 33, 48 (Divination), 179, 198 f., 240.
Phoenicia, Phoenicians, 6, 220, 259, 261, 265.
Pianchi, 227.
Pietschmann, 123, 160.
Pillar, 44, 218, 228, 231 (symbolic use). See also *maṣṣêbah.*
Pinches, 29 n.
Piru, 240 n.
Pleiades, 51.
Pnê-Rimmon (Rammûn), 171.
Pockets, 108.
Pool of Siloam, 128, 254.
Porcupine, 197.
Potter, Pottery, 310.
Priestercodex, 234.
Prophet, 317.
Ptolemy Lagi, 229.
Ptolemy Philometor, 234.

Pul (*Pulu*), i.e. Tiglath-Pileser III, 4.
Pur-il-Sagali, 80.

Rabbath (Moab), 206; Rabbath (Ammon), 213, 216, 326.
Rabshaḳeh, 40, 315, 352 f., 354 (Etymology).
Rahab, 19, 27, 32, 316.
Raisin-cakes, 212.
Ramah, 172.
Rameses II, 230.
Rammân, 51.
Rammân-nirâri III, 3, 7, 12, 164 n., 204.
Ramoth-Gilead, 11.
Raphia, 31 n.
Rashi, 277, 366 n.
Rassam, 8.
Rawlinson, Sir H., 79.
Reformation, Josiah's, 45; Ḥezeḳiah's, 355 f.
Remaliah, 129.
Rephaim, 145; valley of, 148, 217.
Reṣeph, 359.
Resurrection, 284.
Revelation, Book of, 268.
Rezin (Reṣin), 9-12, 15, 129, 156.
Rhinocorura (LXX), 291.
Robe, symbolic use of, 176; state-robe, 258.
Rock, 219, 323.
Rod, 149, 160 f., 323 (mace, club).
Roe: *see* Gazelle.
Roll, 144.
Roorda, 133.
Rose, 348.
Rosenmüller, 221.
Rost, 84.
Rukibti, 36, 370.
Ryle, 205.

Saadia, 188, 366 n.
Sabaeans, 247.
Sackcloth, 109, 254.
Sacrifice, 45.
Samaria, 7, 14, 16, 18, 19, 21, 23, 27, 44, 145, 200, 212, 215, 216, 243, 280, 291-3, 315.
Sanctuary, 45.
Sandal, 150.
Sargon I, 237 n.
Sargon II, 4, 18, 19, 25, 26, 27 f., 29, 30 n., 61, 161, 199, 200 f., 215, 221, 227, 237, 238, 240, 247, 260, 314, 318.
Satchel, 108.
Satyr, 345.
Sayce, 362.
Scent-case, 108.
Schleusner, 365 n.
Schrader, 9 n. and *passim*.
Schultz Hermann, 133.
Sea, 224.
Secker, 333.
Seetzen, 208.
Se‘ir, 246, 322.
Sela‘, 203, 210.
Senjirli inscriptions, 9.
Sennacherib, 4, 21 f., 25, 30, 34 f., 141, 199 f., 215, 250, 260, 292, 303, 352-371 (*passim*).
Sepharvaim, 357.
Seraph (Sārāf), 122, 123, 199 f., 316.
Serpent, fiery flying, 199.
Sesōstris: *see* Rameses II.
Seveh: *see* Sô.
Shabako (Shabaka), 17, 32, 168, 315.
Shaddai, 185, 186.
Shalmaneser II, 3, 7, 10 (black obelisk of), 11.
Shalmaneser IV, 16, 18, 201, 259 f.
Shear Yāshûb (Jāshûb), 60, 72, 126, 128, 168.
Shebna, 32, 40, 255 f.
Sheôl: *see* Hades.
Shiloaḥ (Siloah, Siloam), 139, f.

Shin'ar, 178.
Shoe, 150.
Sibi : *see* Sô.
Sibmah, 205, 213.
Sidḳâ, 35, 36, 370.
Ṣidôn, 35, 42, 277.
Sieve, 322.
Sihon, 205.
Simon the Maccabee, 335 n.
Sin, 56.
Sinai, 322.
Sippar, 261.
Skinner, 25, 77, 124, 191, 249, 281 n., 357.
Smith, Geo., 79, 260.
Smith, Geo. Adam, 77, 89.
Smith, Robertson, 97, 170, 190, 200, 218, 219, 322.
Smith, S. A., 249.
Sô (Seveh and Sibi), 17, 24, 240 n.
Soap, 96.
Socin, 295 n.
Sodom, 88, 91.
Soothsayer, Soothsaying, 47, 48 (Philistine), 105, 145 f.
Sorcery, 229.
Soul, 229 (*néfesh*).
Spirit, 229.
Stade, 128, 221, 244, 260, 329, 351, 355.
Straw, 217.
Sun, 186, 276, 321 ; Sun-image, 218 ; Sun-pillar, 290.
Swallow, 365, 366.
Syria (Aram), 3, 7, 15, 156, 198, 204, 215, 216, 229 (=Assyria); Syro-Ephraimite War, 11, 22, 33, 114, 127 f., 199 f.

Tabeël, 129.
Tabernacles, Feast of, 45, 272, 295, 304, 322.
Tablet, 138, 316.
Taboo, 123.
Tammuz, 220.
Tarshish, 259, 262 f., Tarshish ships, 103, 262.
Tartan (*Turtanu*), 79, 238, 354.
Taunt-song, 191.
Taylor cylinder, 34, 173, 200, 202, 251, 370.
Telassar, 359.
Temâ, 248.
Tennyson, 142.
Teraphim, 145.
Terebinth, 45, 97.
Thebes, 340.
Thothmes III, 5.
Threshing, Threshing-sledge, 301.
Tiâmat, 286, 316 : *see* Dragon.
Tiele, 362.
Tiglath-Pileser I, 166, 192.
Tiglath-Pileser III, 4, 6, 9, 10 f., 14 f., 17, 20, 21, 22, 139, 166, 198, 200 f., 204, 209, 247, 314.
Tigris, 242.
Tirhakah (Taharḳo), 5, 26 n., 37, 136 n., 223, 260, 353, 359.
Tishri (Ethanim), 212 n.
Topheth, 324.
Torah, 93.
Totem, 170.
Trees, 192.
Tree-cultus, 97.
Tristram, 208.
Trito-Isaiah, 64.
Tsetze-fly, 136, 223.
Tyre, 9, 10, 42, 198, 259-67, 271, 340.

Umbreit, 133.
Unfaithfulness, 46.
Unicorn : *see* Ox, wild.
Unwedded life, 109.
Upper Pool, 128.
Usury, 43, 114.
Uzziah ('Azariah), 4, 9, 10, 24, 84, 120, 122, 204, 210, 215.

Vine (Vineyard), 111 f., 213, 286 f.

Virgin, 131 f.; Virgin's Spring, 139.
Vision, 87, 121; Valley of, 249.
Vitringa, 277, 350.

Wall (of garden or vineyard), 113.
Warfare, 8, 43.
Wash-basin, 258 f.
Watch-tower, 112.
Watches of the night, 246.
Water-channels (-courses), 321.
Weaning, 295.
Wealth, 42.
Weir, 133.
Wellhausen, 49, 180, 190, 218, 322, 355.
Whittier, 121.
Wild ox: *see* Ox, wild.
Wilkinson, 161 n., 230.
Winckler, 3, 10, 13, 17, 18, 24, 30, 37, 41, 84, 121, 149, 161 n., 163, 199 f., 223, 238, 239 f., 249, 260, 261, 351, 352 f., 372.
Wind = vanity, 284.
Wine, 112.
Wine-press, 112, 214.
Wine-vat, 112.
Worship, 45.

Xerxes, 227.

Yahweh, 46, 50, 51 n., (atmospheric) 51 f., (universal Sovereign and righteous Judge) 55 f., (Holy One of Israel, and spiritual) 62, (abode in Zion) 186, 198, 225-7, 229, (riding on clouds) 286 f., 310, (Creator or Fashioner) 313, (interposes against Assyria) 316, (slays Rahab) 325, 334, 337.
Yaudi: *see* Jaudi.
Yemen (Jemen), 248.

Zeboim, 18.
Zebulon, 14.
Zerubbabel, 153, 178.
Zeus, 52 n.
Zimmern, 111 n., 354.
Zion, 2, 16, 27, 28, 37, 60, 62; daughter of Z. 91; the harlot, 95; 109, 110, 144, 153, 200, 201 f., 210, 254, 291, 297, 298, 319, 325, 327, 338, 340, 347.
Zoan, 231, 315.
Zoar, 207, 208 f.

OXFORD: HORACE HART
PRINTER TO THE UNIVERSITY